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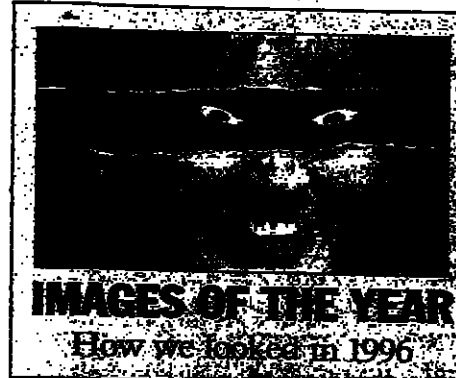
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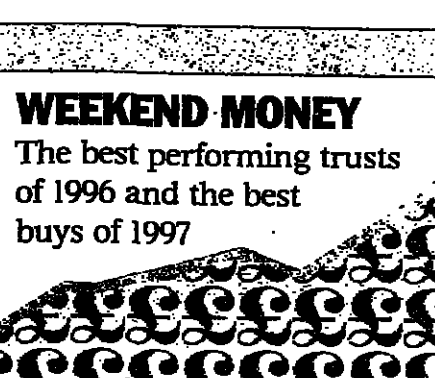
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SATURDAY DECEMBER 28 1996



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'Great evil in our society' attacked

Abortion will be poll issue, says Hume

By Ruth Gledhill and Andrew Pierce

CARDINAL BASIL HUME will tomorrow put abortion firmly on the election agenda when he describes it as a "great evil" in his strongest condemnation so far on the issue.

The intervention by the spiritual leader of the 4.4 million Roman Catholics in England and Wales will encourage the further mobilisation of anti-abortion supporters, who have pledged to turn it into a vital election issue.

Cardinal Hume, in an interview to be broadcast tomorrow, defends the right of church leaders to engage in politics. He says that they were neglecting their God-given responsibility if they fail to do so. In the interview for GMTV's *Sunday*, he says: "There are some things which are clearly good. There are some things which are clearly evil."

One example of evil was abortion. "There's no way in which the church will change its attitude towards that. And I think in future generations we'll be pleased that somebody has stood very firm on that issue. I am quite convinced that abortion is a great evil in our society and really unworthy of a civilised society."

Up to 50 MPs may face a challenge from anti-abortionists in next year's general election. The Pro-Life Alliance,



Hume: church will not change its attitude

which will be entitled to one party political broadcast, last night welcomed the cardinal's comments. The organisation, which has secured funding to open offices in London, the Midlands and Scotland, has picked more than a dozen candidates, including one Muslim.

Professor Jack Scarbrick, the national chairman of Life, the anti-abortion charity, which is backing the election effort, said: "The support of Cardinal Hume will give a flying start to our general election campaign. It will help to ensure that for the first time, as in the United States, a person's view on abortions is an election issue and could cost him or her their seat."

The comments from Cardinal Hume will revive charges of hypocrisy against Tony

Blair, the Labour leader, who has never voted against abortion in the Commons but professes his personal opposition to it.

Mr Blair's stance was singled out for criticism by Cardinal Thomas Winning, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, who accused him of "washing his hands" of abortion. Last year there were 170,000 abortions in Britain down from a peak of almost 200,000 in 1990.

Mr Blair's aides fear that he is becoming the target of an American-style campaign waged by single-issue zealots, who have latched on to Cardinal Winning's criticism. John Major has voted against abortion in the past and the Tory Government reduced the limit on which abortions can be obtained from 28 to 24 weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Cardinal Hume is speaking out only weeks after the Catholic bishops issued their document, *The Common Good*, which argued that voters could look favourably on a candidate whose general platform was in line with Catholic social teaching even if they differed with it on a single issue. It was condemned by anti-abortion groups and seen as pro-Labour. Cardinal Hume said he felt moved to speak after 3,000 frozen embryos were destroyed in

Continued on page 2, col 1



Crowds of shoppers pack Oxford Street yesterday as the post-Christmas sales began. Banks, stores and travel firms reported record business.

Feel-good factor returns with the sales

By Emma Wilkins

THE return of consumer confidence was confirmed yesterday as department stores and shopping centres reported a record start to the post-Christmas sales.

There was further good news when the Nationwide Building Society said 900,000 households had been freed from negative equity thanks to rising prices in 1996. There are now 800,000 with negative equity, down from 1.7 million

at the end of 1995. It expects house prices, which increased by 8.5 per cent nationally in 1996, to rise by a further 7 per cent in 1997. Prices in Greater London and the South East have risen 10 per cent in the past 12 months.

Yesterday, Selfridges in London said its sales were up between 10-15 per cent on the same day last year. In Sheffield, the Meadowhall Shopping Centre was preparing for a record 150,000 customers. Despite snow in much of

Britain, shoppers were queuing. Many said they wanted to buy designer clothes as store managers reported a return to the mid-1980s "love of the label" phenomenon.

One of the most popular bargains this year is package holidays, according to travel agents and tour operators. Bookings are up 30 per cent on last year, with bargains of up to 25 per cent off.

The scale of the return of confidence was apparent from record amounts of money

withdrawn from cashpoint machines over the holidays.

NatWest said that on December 24, a record £72.5 million was withdrawn — a third up on last year. A total of 2.7 million credit and debit card authorisations were recorded on Christmas Eve — the equivalent of 80 a second.

Vittorio Radice, the managing director of Selfridges, said: "In the first four hours we served 12,000 customers and there were 800 in the queue when the doors opened."

"Consumer confidence is coming back because everyone feels good at the moment. The economy is going well, people have got secure jobs and they are feeling like spending money."

In Newcastle upon Tyne, one family began queuing for the sales on Christmas Eve. Malcolm Kidd, 38, took it in turns with his cousin to sit outside Barker & Stonehouse's department store to buy a £2,000 three-piece suite reduced to £99.

Yachtsman tells of hunt for friend

The British yachtsman who rescued a fellow competitor in a round-the-world race during terrible storms has spoken of his relief at finding him alive.

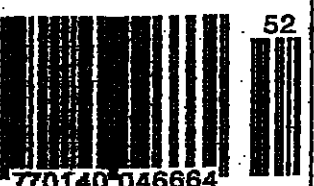
Pete Goss sailed more than 150 miles off his course to find Raphael Dimethi, who was fighting hypothermia after sinking in his life raft for 36 hours. Page 3

£2.6m payoffs in electricity deal

Directors of Northern Electric will share almost £2.6 million in payoffs and options after the company's £782 million takeover by CE Electric of America. The payments will increase to more than £22.5 million the windfall due to utility chiefs after successful takeover bids. Page 23

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Kremlin cleaning lady dishes the dirt on Russia's leaders

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

THE most experienced mover along the Kremlin's treacherous corridors of power has broken her silence after 60 years to reveal what many Russians had long suspected — that despots and democrats are not that different once in office.

According to Polina Malinkina, who has been a cleaner at the Kremlin since 1937, the country's political elite can be easily divided into two groups — those who wipe their feet and those who do not.

After years of dutiful service shovelling snow, emptying bins and cleaning floors the wily 80-year-old has concluded that, by and large, the Kremlin's leaders are "not a bad bunch" and that Stalin was one of her favourite bosses.

"He was so small and so kind," she told the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*

newspaper. "I used to weed the flower beds. He would come out and sit on the steps to smoke a pipe. The security people would try to shoo me away, but Stalin would say 'do not bother Polya, let her get on with her weeding'."

"He looked at me in such a kind way. Sometimes there were tears in his eyes. He cared about the common people. When I hear gossip about the repressions, all I can say is that I did not see anything, and that is the truth," she said.

Mrs Malinkina said that her only disappointment with the Soviet dictator was because of the desecration of cathedrals. As for Stalin's notorious advisers, she said that Vyacheslav Molotov, the foreign minister who concluded the secret pact with Hitler, was by far the dirtiest and that the only things she had to clear from his office were

bottles of imported wine and champagne.

Lavrenti Beria, Stalin's murderous secret police chief, was by far the messiest. "I had the biggest problems with Lavrenti Palich [Beria]. Everything he wrote he would tear up into the tiniest pieces or cut into shreds with scissors. Those were the days before the vacuum cleaner, so I would have to pick up every scrap by hand. He was a strange character."

Although she felt sorry for Leonid Brezhnev and admitted that she cried when he died, she had little sympathy for Nikita Khrushchev, especially after he ordered part of the Kremlin destroyed for a conference hall.

Mrs Malinkina had nothing to say about the brief Kremlin tenures of the late Soviet leaders Konstantin Chernenko and Yuri Andropov, and reserved commenting

about Mikhail Gorbachev, because she was not assigned to cleaning his floor at the Kremlin. As for her current boss, she said that she was forbidden from discussing President Yeltsin's notorious drinking habits, but did say that he was "not a very stable person" but otherwise "not a bad man". She admitted that she did vote for him in last summer's presidential elections, that he was secretly a God-fearing man and that he never failed to greet her when they met in the Kremlin.

Since Mrs Malinkina and Mr Yeltsin are the only two people in Russia who do not have to show a pass to get into the Kremlin, she was asked who ultimately carried more authority. "Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin] cleans Russia and I clean the Kremlin," she said. "It is hard to say who is better. He has more to clean — it is a bigger job."



From left, Brezhnev ("I cried when he died"), Beria ("messy"), Mrs Malinkina, Molotov ("tidy") and Stalin ("so kind")

Tories plan computer training for all adults

By Andrew Pierce and Jill Sherman

JOHN MAJOR will announce plans in the new year to offer every adult in the country free computer training in a deal with some of the biggest private sector companies.

The pledge will be one of new ideas in the Tory Party election manifesto, which is close to completion. Mr Major plans to break with tradition and reveal his election pitch in January rather than wait for the publication of the manifesto at the general election.

The move is intended to show that the Tories have not run out of steam after 17 years in power and to try to regain the initiative from Labour, which is still far ahead in the opinion polls.

Under the computer training initiative every person above school-leaving age will be offered a voucher which they can exchange for free training in information technology. The idea has been drawn up by a cabinet committee, chaired by Viscount Cranborne, which was set up at the beginning of the year to examine IT. The Downing Street policy unit has enthusiastically embraced the scheme.

The Cabinet Office and the Department of Trade and Industry are co-ordinating

continued on page 2, col 1

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Trial in Dhahran could take place within days

Family pleads for nurse accused over murder

By RUSSELL JENKINS
AND MICHAEL BINYON

THE parents and brother of one of the British nurses facing public execution in Saudi Arabia described their anguish yesterday as "every family's nightmare".

The British consul plans to visit Lucille McLauchlan, 31, from Dundee, and Deborah Parry, 41, from the Midlands, early next week in the women's prison in Dhahran with a list of lawyers prepared to represent them.

Miss McLauchlan has convinced her parents of her innocence in a series of brief telephone calls. Stan and Ann McLauchlan looked distraught and fearful at a press conference in Dundee as they listened to their son John, 28, express their hope that she should be allowed to return home.

Both women are charged with murdering Yvonne Gifford, 55, an Australian theatre nurse at King Fahd Military Medical College where all three worked. They could face execution by public beheading if they are found guilty in an Islamic court.

He said: "As you can imagine, the last few days have been absolute hell for my family. We have spoken to Lucy very briefly on the phone and she has assured us of her innocence. We are obviously worried sick about her situation and are making efforts to secure the very best legal representation for Lucy."

The family spoke of their fears as a senior British barrister offered to send experienced legal counsel to Saudi Arabia to act as legal observers. Nicholas Stewart, QC, chairman of The Bar Human Rights Committee, said that lawyers could be in place at short notice.

"Having a daughter held in a foreign prison is every family's nightmare and media speculation about the possible outcome has made this a very harrowing experience for my family," said Mr McLauchlan.

"We have been told by Lucy that she has been treated well by the Saudi authorities but



Stan and Ann McLauchlan are convinced of their daughter's innocence and are trying to arrange defence lawyers in an attempt to end "every family's nightmare"

we are naturally concerned about her welfare."

Both women have been allowed to return to their apartments to collect personal belongings and bedding. Later unspecified nursing sources in Dhahran, quoted by a Scottish news agency, claimed that Miss McLauchlan had been browbeaten into signing a confession. The two women were subjected to five days of questioning in the absence of lawyers and told that they could go home if they signed.

It also quoted an unnamed journalist in Saudi Arabia claiming that Miss McLauchlan had been charged with being an accessory to

murder and has not been accused of stabbing the Australian nurse or hitting her with a hammer.

Defence lawyers enjoy only limited rights in Saudi Arabian courts, which are based entirely on the Sharia, Islamic jurisprudence interpreted strictly according to Koranic tradition. They may not even be allowed to appear before the three Sharia judges who will decide the nurses' fate. They certainly will not be allowed to cross-examine witnesses in any meaningful way.

There is no guarantee that either the lawyers or the women will know when the prison guards will come for

the women to bring them before the court. The trial may take place within days. Once before the court, the mullahs have only one option before them if the women are found guilty: a death sentence, most likely carried out as a public beheading.

Murder is punishable by death, but the victim's next of kin has the ultimate decision whether to enforce the penalty or whether to allow a convicted murderer to go free — usually after the payment of compensation, so called "blood money". The victim's family indicated again last night that they are not intending to seek clemency.

Triple-transplant survivor marries

The first patient to have a triple transplant in the United Kingdom is to marry his childhood sweetheart today.

Haldene Butler, 23, from Omagh, Co Tyrone, will marry Julie Feathers, who stood by him throughout his lengthy illness and recovery.

Mr Haldene, who was suffering from an advanced form of cancer, had a "last-chance" liver, pancreas and small bowel transplant in March at St James Hospital, Leeds. The operation lasted eight and a half hours. In spite of a number of setbacks that saw him return to the hospital for a bowel operation, the couple set today as their wedding date. Miss Feathers said: "I am so happy. Everybody is looking forward to the big day."

Man charged after fire death

A man was charged last night with the murder of Michelle Bone-Kneil, 34, who died in a house fire in Wolverhampton on Christmas Day in which her two young children were badly injured. Alan Watkins, 29, from Bushbury, Wolverhampton, is to appear at Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court today. His wife, Sue, 28, who was also being questioned, was due to be released without charge.

Gorbachev birthmark gene found

American scientists have identified the gene responsible for port-wine stains, the disfiguring purplish birthmark associated with Mikhail Gorbachev. The stains, known as naevi, are caused by a mass of blood vessels that form incorrectly in the growing foetus.



Professor Bjorn Olsen, of Harvard Medical School, and colleagues report in the journal *Cell* the discovery of a genetic mutation that causes such abnormalities. The hypothesis is strengthened by two further papers in the same journal.

Police hunt for serial bomber

Police are hunting a bomber who has exploded three crude devices in Manchester. The latest, on Boxing Day, destroyed a telephone kiosk. No warnings were given. Police said the devices were more powerful with each blast. All three were made from a metal pipe packed with explosive and capped at both ends, similar to the bomb that exploded during the Atlanta Olympics, in killing one person.

Footballer hurt in gang attack

The Birmingham City footballer Gary Breen, 23, had his hand broken and suffered head injuries when he was attacked as he left a north London restaurant with his fiancée. He needed 12 stitches after a bottle was smashed over his head when he confronted a gang trying to steal his car. He had surgery on his injured hand yesterday and he will be out of action for a month.

Police search camps for Kayleigh

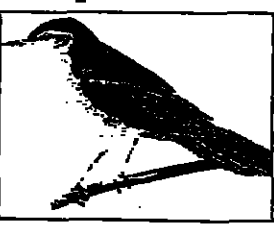
Police hunting for Kayleigh Ward, the missing nine-year-old from Chester, yesterday searched travellers' camps in North Wales but found no sign of the girl. Officers from the Cheshire and North Wales forces checked camps at Ruthin Road and Croes Newydd, just outside Wrexham. People returning home after Christmas are urged to check garages, sheds and caravans in case she is sleeping rough.

Finger found in takeaway meal

A woman eating a takeaway Chinese meal discovered a finger inside a piece of rubber glove. Debra Hand, 35, a care assistant from Urmsdon, Greater Manchester, had bought the sweet and sour chicken after finishing her shopping on Christmas Eve. Police have checked staff at the Rainbow Chinese takeaway in Urmsdon, and hospitals. The finger is being kept in cold storage.

Cetti's warbler takes up residence

Cetti's warbler, which took up residence in Britain only 24 years ago, is thriving and appears to be here to stay, according to the first national survey of the species. The small songbird is common on the Continent and was first recorded in Britain as an occasional lone vagrant in the 1960s. In 1971 several birds arrived. Three survived the winter and probably bred near Canterbury in 1972. In a survey in the spring of this year, English Nature and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds counted at least 535 singing males.



Battersea sees rise in stray dogs

Battersea Dogs Home entertained 671 strays over Christmas, 200 more than usual. Thirty-two dogs were taken to the home during the holiday period. Two of them, three-month-old Labrador-cross puppies, were found abandoned in a dustbin. A spokesman for Battersea said: "It seems more and more that older dogs are being abandoned. It is very sad."

Protest at prison body searches

Probation officers have protested about new searching procedures at jails in England and Wales, which they claim are intrusive and heavy-handed. More than 60 probation officers, mostly women, have complained to the prison authorities. The officers claim they are forced to submit to the body searches, which are not applied to police or immigration officers entering jails.

Hume attack on abortion

Continued from page 1
July under human fertilisation and embryology legislation. The tragedy of Dunblane had caused further reflection on violence in society.

He calls for a rediscovery of religion by society. "So often when people discuss religion, and think about it, their minds go to the institution or to the clergy. If they go a little deeper than that they see it in terms of social action, they see it in terms of keeping rules. They see it also as the realisation of a certain ideal."

Cardinal Hume does not refer to the electoral challenge being prepared by the Pro-Life Alliance, some of whose funding has come from Mohamed Al Fayed, the chairman of Harrods.

Among the prominent MPs likely to face a challenge include Labour frontbenchers Paul Boateng, Mo Mowlam, Clare Short and the Labour candidate Barbara Follett. Last month a 14-year-old schoolgirl refused to receive a prize from Ms Follett because of her strong support for abortion.

The Tories will also encounter difficulties. Prominent pro-choice supporters include Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, and Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney-General.

Jane Roe, the co-ordinator of the Pro-Choice Alliance, said: "Cardinal Hume's comments merely serve to encourage extremists who are planning

to turn abortion into an election issue. He is helping to do that. Abortion should be a private matter between a doctor and the woman. It has no place on the hustings."

Cardinal Hume, in his interview, says that he was not surprised at the political reaction to *The Common Good* document, which had been interpreted by some as sympathetic to Labour social policy. He said: "It was an excellent examination of conscience for everybody in political life."

The idea that it was a kind of Labour Party manifesto was wrong, he said. "It was miles from that. No, this was an attempt to sum up the last 100 years of Catholic social teaching."

Tory attacked for planning to work as 'part-time' MP

By A STAFF REPORTER

LABOUR has denounced Archie Norman, the chairman of Asda and a Conservative parliamentary candidate, for claiming that being a backbench MP is not a full-time job. Mr Norman made the remark after stating that he wished to remain as part-time chairman of the supermarket group, if possible, for three years.

Brian Wilson, who is co-ordinating Labour's national election campaign, said that those who voted for Mr Norman, who is to fight the safe Tory seat of Tunbridge Wells, would be "short-changed".

Mr Norman, 42, who is married with one daughter, said in a new paper interview last week: "Being a backbench MP is not a full-time occupation."

Mr Wilson said: "This is a remarkable illustration of how the Tories intend to approach the next Parliament. Perhaps the Tory chairman, Dr Brian Mawhinney, should say if this doctrine on backbench work-rate is to be the general rule



Norman: hopes to continue as Asda

for Tory candidates. Most MPs find that constituency and parliamentary work add up to something more than a full-time job. The idea that you can also run a grocery chain is bizarre."

This year, MPs got more than 20 weeks' holiday, with a 12-week summer recess, although most claim that they work on constituency matters when the House is not sitting.

Computer training for all planned

Continued from page 1
government action in conjunction with computer giants such as Microsoft, British Telecom and Dixons.

Training will be offered through outlets of these companies or further education centres and the scheme will have a minimal cost to the

taxpayer. Mr Major believes that the proposals will outflank the Labour Party, which has developed links with British Telecom to provide a computer in every school.

"We don't think the children are so important. They are already computer literate. We are targeting every adult," a

Downing Street source said.

Mr Major is spending the recess finalising a number of policy ideas which he can unveil during January and February, rather than waiting for the manifesto launch which is normally held after the start of the official three-week election campaign.

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Bottomley takes Del Boy to task over Mirror image



Nicholas Lyndhurst and David Jason dressed for a party in Christmas Day's *Only Fools and Horses*

BY ANDREW PIERCE
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ONLY fools and horses work, the saying goes. Yesterday Virginia Bottomley demonstrated that a Heritage Secretary never stops working, by demanding an explanation over suspicions of advertising on the BBC's top-rated Christmas Day comedy.

The Labour-supporting *Daily Mirror* was displayed prominently in four scenes in *Only Fools and Horses*, and mentioned in one other. Mrs Bottomley has ordered her officials to examine whether the show, watched by 18.7 million people, breached the corporation's strict guidelines.

The BBC angrily rejected any

suggestion that it had done anything wrong in the show, which stars David Jason as the south London rogue "Del Boy" Trotter. A spokesman said: "It is the sort of newspaper Del Boy would read. But you can never tell with him. Next time he could be reading the *Financial Times*. We are very proud of him."

The character was shown reading the tabloid newspaper in his Peckham council flat. There was a publicity poster in the Trotters' favourite "caff". The cafe is a real-life eatery in Bristol and the BBC, as part of its contract, cannot change the decor, which included a copy of the poster.

In another scene the landlord of the Nag's Head, where the Trotter family co-ordinate many of their

dubious enterprises, was shown behind the bar immersed in the *Mirror's* sports pages. Nicholas Lyndhurst, one of the co-stars, was also filmed reading the newspaper.

The *Daily Mirror* trumpeted their contribution to the show with the headline: "Only fools don't read *The Mirror*" and crowed about the positive publicity reaped from the exposure. But Mrs Bottomley, who is no fan of the *Daily Mirror* or Del Boy, said: "The behaviour of the BBC, which is funded by public money, must be seen to be beyond reproach. There is also a place for light-hearted fun but product placement must be vigorously observed. The BBC is a major national institution which must be protected against allegations of unfairness."

Mrs Bottomley admitted she had not watched the episode. She thought that the standard of television over Christmas was excellent "but I have to admit that *Only Fools and Horses* is not my programme". Instead, she watched the Grace Kelly film *Dial M for Murder*.

The BBC's guidelines state clearly that it must "never give the impression that they are endorsing or promoting any product, service or company". They add: "In drama, comedy and entertainment programme producers have to consider whether there is a really strong editorial justification for using branded products as props."

Lord Rees-Mogg, a former BBC governor, said: "The BBC should conduct a thorough inquiry. I sus-

pect they may conclude this was indiscreet but innocent but they must establish whether there was deliberate product placement. If there was, the BBC has breached its guidelines."

But the BBC spokesman said: "The nature of the plot required that some of the leading characters read popular newspapers. At least one racing newspaper was in the same programme. It made the scenes seem more authentic. We reject any allegation of product placement. Del Boy reads popular newspapers."

Brendon Parsons, the deputy editor of the *Daily Mirror*, said: "I wonder if she would have made the same complaint if it had been a Tory-supporting newspaper that was being read with such pleasure."

Rescue yachtsman tells of hunt for shipwrecked friend

BY EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT

THE British yachtsman who rescued a fellow competitor in a round-the-world race during terrible storms spoke yesterday of his relief at finding him alive.

Pete Goss, from Cornwall, sailed more than 150 miles off his course to find Raphael Dinelli, who was fighting hypothermia after sitting in his liferaft for 36 hours. Goss, 34, found him after an exhausting four-hour search in the southern Indian Ocean, most of it in darkness and very difficult conditions.

In a message to race headquarters in Paris from his yacht *Aqua Quorum*, which was about 1,200 miles southwest of Perth, Goss said: "I have just had the best Christmas present ever. Raphael is on board. He is very cold and happy and he has no injuries. I've just given him a cup of tea. Cheers, Pete."

The softly spoken former Royal Marine, who has the smallest boat in the non-stop, single-handed Vendée Globe race, later gave an update on the Frenchman's health. "He is very cold but not hypothermic," he said. "He is in very good spirits, but he has many bruises and is very stiff."

"His main concerns are his feet, which have been very



Pete Goss: was relieved to find his colleague

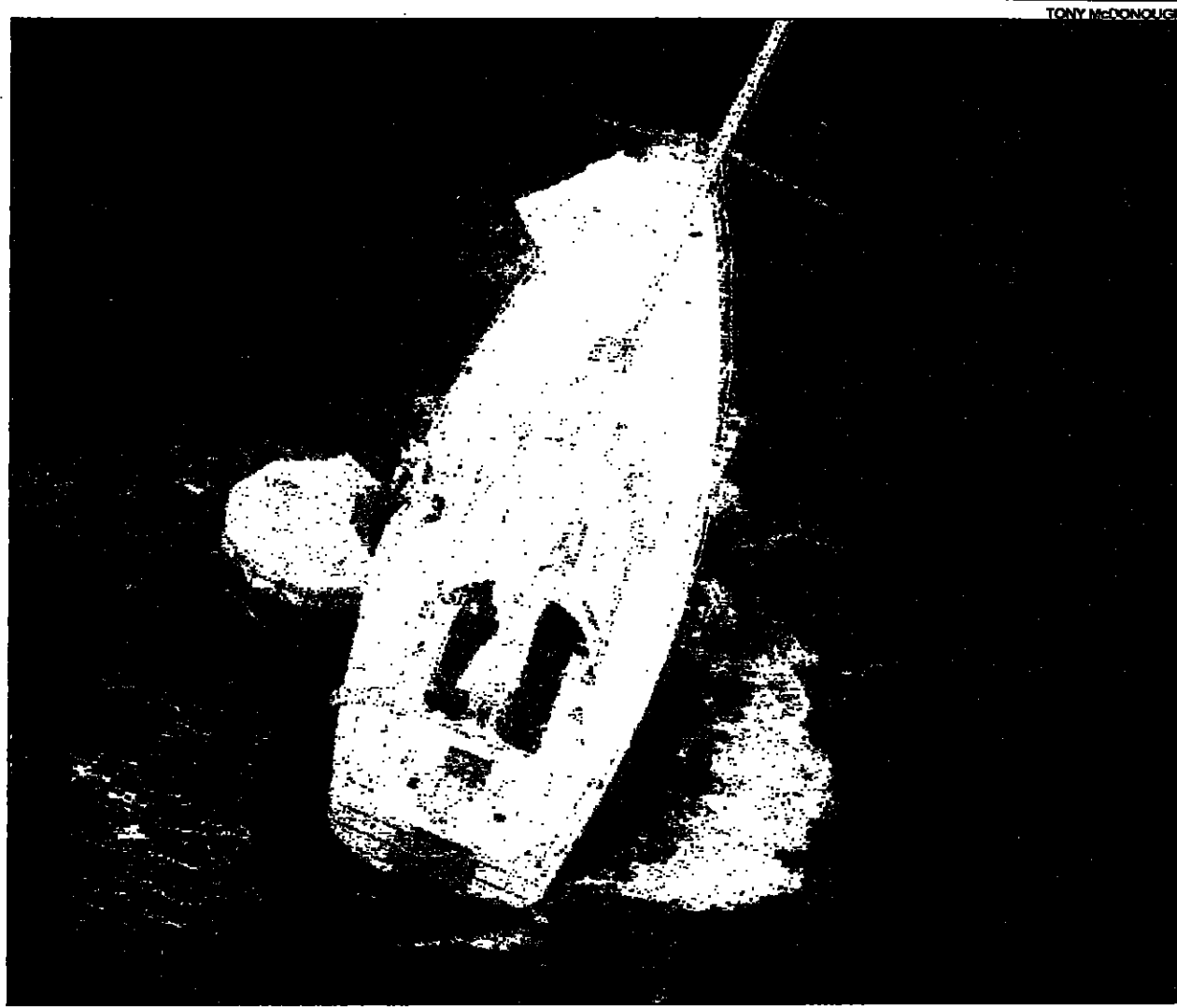
tained considerable damage and was knocked flat in the water several times as he tried to push as hard as he could. He had earlier told Paris: "I have 55-60 knots of wind and a vicious sea."

"My boat has been knocked down three times already. *Aqua Quorum* can't make a direct course, the weather is so bad here."

The rescue was assisted by an aircraft of the Royal Australian Air Force which helped to guide Goss towards Dinelli's position. The crew, who 12 hours earlier had dropped a survival pack and liferaft to the Frenchman, took pictures of the rescue before they left the scene.

In the past, mid-ocean rescues of single-handers have been carried out exclusively by land-based emergency services, causing considerable debate about the cost of such operations. Goss's rescue of Dinelli underlines, however, that often the best bet for a yachtsman in trouble is his fellow competitors.

Goss, who was praised for his "courage and determination" by Philippe Jeantot, the race director, will now carry on racing and is expected to drop Dinelli off at Hobart in Tasmania. He will

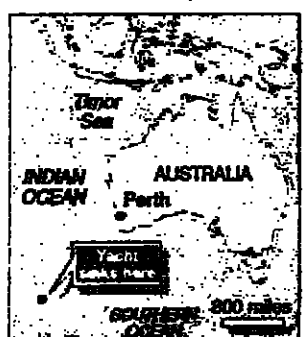


Raphael Dinelli being plucked from his liferaft by Pete Goss. He had spent 36 hours adrift in the ocean

receive redress for the time he has spent on the rescue so that his overall position in the race will not be affected.

The Vendée Globe is by a long way the world's toughest yacht race — held every four years, it attracts only the hardest skippers. Sixteen boats started from Les Sables d'Olonne in France on November 3 but there are now only 10 still racing after retirements, mainly as a result of collisions with floating debris or ice.

Dinelli was racing with the fleet but was not formally admitted to the race because he had failed to complete his 2,000-mile single-handed qualifying sail in the timeframe set out by the organisers. Goss still has 13,000 miles to go to the finish and is currently 3,000 miles behind the race leader.



Dinelli had an anxious and cold wait in the waters of the southern Indian Ocean after his yacht went down with winds blowing at more than 60 knots

Police question Mandy Allwood over allegations of loan fraud

BY DANIEL MCGROY

MANDY ALLWOOD, who sold the story of her octuplet pregnancy to a newspaper, is facing demands over a string of unpaid debts and a police investigation into a loan fraud.

She earned more than £350,000 in deals concerning her pregnancy, which followed fertility treatment, but lost all eight babies in October after rejecting medical advice that it would be safer to have some of them aborted.

Police released Miss Allwood, 31, on bail after she was arrested last week by fraud detectives from her home town of Solihull over an alleged

loan application made in her name earlier this year. Her boyfriend, Paul Hudson, 37, a former bankrupt, drove her to Solihull police station to be interviewed by fraud squad detectives. Police said: "A 31-year-old woman was arrested and interviewed about suspicion of conspiracy to defraud and the evasion of liability by deception."

She was bailed to report to Solihull police station in February. The inquiry is believed to concern an allegation that, on an application for a loan, the figure given for her income was inflated. The incident is thought to have occurred be-



Allwood: interviewed

fore she came to public attention in August. Miss Allwood has faced county court judgments for debt and there were allega-

tions that her financial affairs were being examined by the Benefits Agency. There have been claims for unpaid debts from shops and companies in the West Midlands.

Sources close to Miss Allwood and Mr Hudson, who now live in Wimbledon, southwest London, said yesterday: "They feel that creditors are coming out the woodwork now they know they have money. All the bills have been, or will be, paid."

Miss Allwood intended to contest all the financial and legal claims against her, the source said. She would argue that many of the debts arose from agreements involving her former husband.

Surfing dog is victim of crime wave

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH

BRITAIN's top surfing dog was last night missing, presumed kidnapped. Max was being hunted by police after vanishing from outside a supermarket where its owner was buying it steak for Christmas dinner.

The four-year-old alston-collie cross has become a television star and a tourist attraction on the south Wales coast where its owner, Peter Bounds, the former captain of the British surfing team, runs a sailing and surfing centre.

On Christmas Eve Mr Bounds left Max tethered to railings outside a supermarket in Haverfordwest but returned to find his pet had disappeared. A search over



Max surfing off the coast of South Wales on the board specially adapted by his owner, Peter Bounds

the holiday period has yielded no clues.

"I'm absolutely shattered. We are inseparable and I miss him terribly," Mr Bounds said. "Max follows me everywhere I go. Normally I don't even bother to tie him up because Max will

always sit and wait for me. But because the town centre was busy I tied his lead to the railings and tested it was secure by pulling against the knot with my foot."

He added: "I'm convinced somebody has stolen him as a present for a child. It's just

very strange how quickly he went. I was only in the supermarket for a couple of minutes." He has put up 200 posters around Haverfordwest offering a £100 reward for the dog's safe return.

Max turned up at Mr Bounds's door as a stray two years ago and was then introduced to surfing. Mr Bounds would push the dog out to sea and it then rode the waves back in again. Max has its own wet suit and rides an 8ft beginner's surf board. Last month it was presented with the Pro Dog Pet of the Year award by the author Jilly Cooper.

"If the board is going off line Max has the ability to level it out," Mr Bounds said. "That's the advantage of four legs instead of two."



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Cold weather payments triggered in Highlands and South West as freeze spreads

Road chaos to worsen with new year snow

BY DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

ACCIDENTS caused by the snow led to chaos on the roads yesterday, and at least one man died in the freezing conditions. Forecasters have predicted heavier snowfalls over the new year Bank Holiday. However, the Government announced that only people in remote parts of Scotland and the South West would receive cold weather payments.

The body of Edward Rees, 52, was found in a frozen pond near Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales, after he went missing while taking his spaniel for a walk. There was no sign of his pet, which it is believed he was trying to rescue from the pond. The RSPCA said that more than half of ice-related drownings involved the attempted rescue of another person or a dog.

Mountain rescue teams continued their search for John Winship, 53, of Bristol, who

went missing after beginning a walk at Glen Nevis in Highland on Christmas Day during clear weather.

Mr Winship, a keen mountaineer, was wearing water-proof clothing and carrying a rucksack containing extra clothes, food and drink, but conditions are severe with freezing temperatures at night and snow on heights.

With the prospect of continuing harsh weather, Help The Aged called for cold weather payments to be triggered more easily. The Department of Social Security pays £8.50 per week to income support claimants who are pensioners or have children under five, or disabled people and their partners. The money is paid automatically if the temperature is at freezing or below for seven days at their local weather station, or if such conditions are forecast.

Payments have been trig-

gered in Scotland around Aviemore, Braemar, Tulloch, Eskdalemuir and Loch Glas-carnoch, and in England near Liscombe, Somerset.

Help The Aged wants to change the qualifying time to four days, pointing out that only seven million people received the payments last year despite a cold winter. Audrey Wise, Labour MP for Preston, is proposing a backbench Bill requiring that the wind chill factor be taken into account when making the calculations. "The qualification for the payment has to be rigorous," she said, "but the present system is designed for it to be triggered as infrequently as possible."

Harriet Harman, the Shadow Social Security Secretary, said one million pensioners would fail to receive the cold weather payments because they failed to claim the income support to which they were

entitled. "The stark truth is that Britain's poorest pensioners may have to choose between heating and eating this winter because the Tories have failed to ensure they get the benefits they are entitled to," she said.

Snow showers moved down from Scotland early yesterday to give Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and the Midlands a light dusting. Nearly three inches settled in parts of the South East at the time of the usual morning rush hour. Because there were no cars to keep the roads warm, they quickly turned to ice. Shoppers then began driving to the sales on the icy roads.

The snow lasted only a couple of hours in each area, but left a trail of accidents. Despite ice and freezing fog which made roads treacherous, motorists ignored police warnings to stay indoors. Several roads were turned into



Audrey Wise, left, and Harriet Harman, who say more people should receive cold weather payments

ice rinks after water mains burst.

The Automobile Association had 1,500 calls an hour yesterday and police reported accidents on most major roads. The Royal Automobile Club said there were hold-ups caused by accidents on motorways in Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey and Essex. The M25

was clogged and smaller roads were closed. Routes around Birmingham were extremely icy.

Heavier snow is possible over England and Wales early next week, especially on high ground in the East.

Forecast and photograph, page 22



Snow in central London yesterday morning added a seasonal touch to Richard I's statue at Westminster

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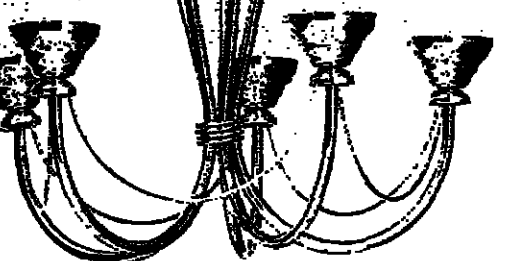
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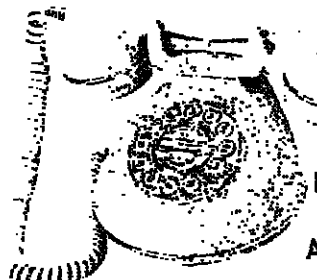
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Appeal to mother of baby left out in cold

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

DOCTORS have issued a photograph of an abandoned baby found under a bush on Boxing Day in the hope that her mother will be encouraged to come forward.

The infant, who had been wrapped in a sheet and towel, is believed to have lain for several hours in temperatures of -3C before being found by Darren Simms, 13, a paper-boy doing his round in Whickham, Gateshead. The baby, named Molly after the daughter of a paramedic who took her to hospital, was said to be progressing well in hospital.

A teenage mother who abandoned her newborn baby two days before Christmas was reunited with him yesterday. The 15-year-old, whose baby was found suffering from hypothermia in Ilford, east London, on Monday, walked into her local police station. The girl, in a distressed state, spent a short time with her son, named Joseph by nurses. His condition was said to be stable.



Molly in hospital yesterday, where she is said to be progressing well

Search may raise planes lost in Bermuda Triangle

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, AIR CORRESPONDENT

TWO British airliners may have been found almost 50 years after their unsolved disappearance in the Bermuda Triangle. A search to solve the mystery is being led by a retired pilot who was due to fly one of the planes.

A sports injury prevented Peter Wilby from taking the controls of the *Star Tiger*, which vanished in 1948. At the time an official report said that "no more baffling problem has ever been presented for investigation". Now aged 75, Mr Wilby plans to charter a robot submarine to raise the wrecks of the lost planes from the seabed 2,500ft below the Atlantic, and finally establish what happened.

More than £500,000 has been invested in a two-year search of the seas off Bermuda by Mr Wilby, two other former pilots and a business partner. The wreckage was discovered by the crew of a Canadian seabed surveyor boat, making sonar sweeps in the area where the two planes made their last reports.

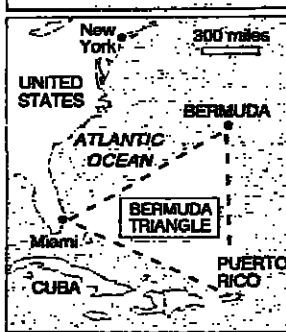
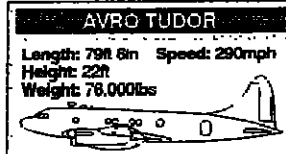
"The fact that I should have been on the first aircraft has

lived with me ever since," Mr Wilby said yesterday at his home in Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire. "All kinds of theories — some of them obvious fantasy — have been put forward for the accidents, but technology has now moved on fast. All the indications are that the wreckage is of very similar aircraft."

A remote-controlled submarine is to be sent to the seabed in February. If the wreckage is shown to be that of the crashed aircraft, attempts to raise them would be made in the summer. Mr Wilby said: "We believe we can raise them and send the wreckage to Farnborough for inspection and test. We may then be able to lay to rest one of the great aviation mysteries."

The *Star Tiger*, a Tudor plane of British South American Airways Corporation, flew from London for a six-week journey in South and Central America. A few days before departure, Mr Wilby hurt his foot playing rugby and reported sick.

Instead, Captain Brian McMillan was at the controls on



the leg from Santa Maria in the Azores to Bermuda. At 3.15 on Friday, January 30, 12 hours after take-off, the pilot made his last radio contact and was told that he was 340 miles northeast of Bermuda. Nothing more was heard of the plane, with 31 people on board. There was no Mayday call, no sign of wreckage and no oil slick.

A year later, an identical aircraft, the *Star Ariel*, was flying southwest from Bermu-

da to Jamaica with 13 passengers and a crew of six. After a routine radio message, the aircraft vanished without trace.

The inquiry into the first accident had reported: "No more baffling problem has ever been presented for investigation. In the complete absence of any reliable evidence as to either the nature or cause of the disaster, whatever happened will never be known and the fate of the *Star Tiger* must remain an unsolved mystery." An inquiry into the second loss also reported that the cause was unknown.

Mr Wilby is convinced that there was some form of defect with the Tudors. He does not believe that the Bermuda Triangle — the area of the Atlantic between Miami, Bermuda and Puerto Rico — is somehow jinxed. There are those who believe that about 100 lost ships and aircraft were the victims of phenomena ranging from rays from the lost city of Atlantis, extraterrestrial beings snatching Earthlings for scientific study, whirlpools, sudden, mini-tornadoes or simply bad navigation.

Soldier who ran Raffles dies in fire at his home

By DANIEL MCGRODY

A FORMER leader of Oxfordshire County Council, who ran Raffles Hotel in Singapore while a serving soldier, died with his wife in a fire at their home yesterday.

Thirty firemen fought the blaze at Geoffrey Fowler's house in Clarendon, Oxfordshire, but were unable to rescue him or his wife, Joan. Mr Fowler, 74, was chairman of the council from 1995 until he retired in May. He sat as an independent councillor after resigning the Conservative whip.

Douglas Hurd, the former Foreign Secretary and MP for Witney, who was a close friend for more than 20 years, was among those who paid tribute. He said: "He was a staunch public servant and Oxfordshire owes him a great deal."

Mr Fowler was asked to run Raffles Hotel while with the Middlesex Regiment after service in the Second World War in Sicily and North Africa. He was later to become the manager of the Grosvenor Hotel in Mayfair and, as chief project manager for Trusthouse Forte, he was responsible for opening 38 new hotels.

Missing girl found hanged in woods

By STEWART TENDLER

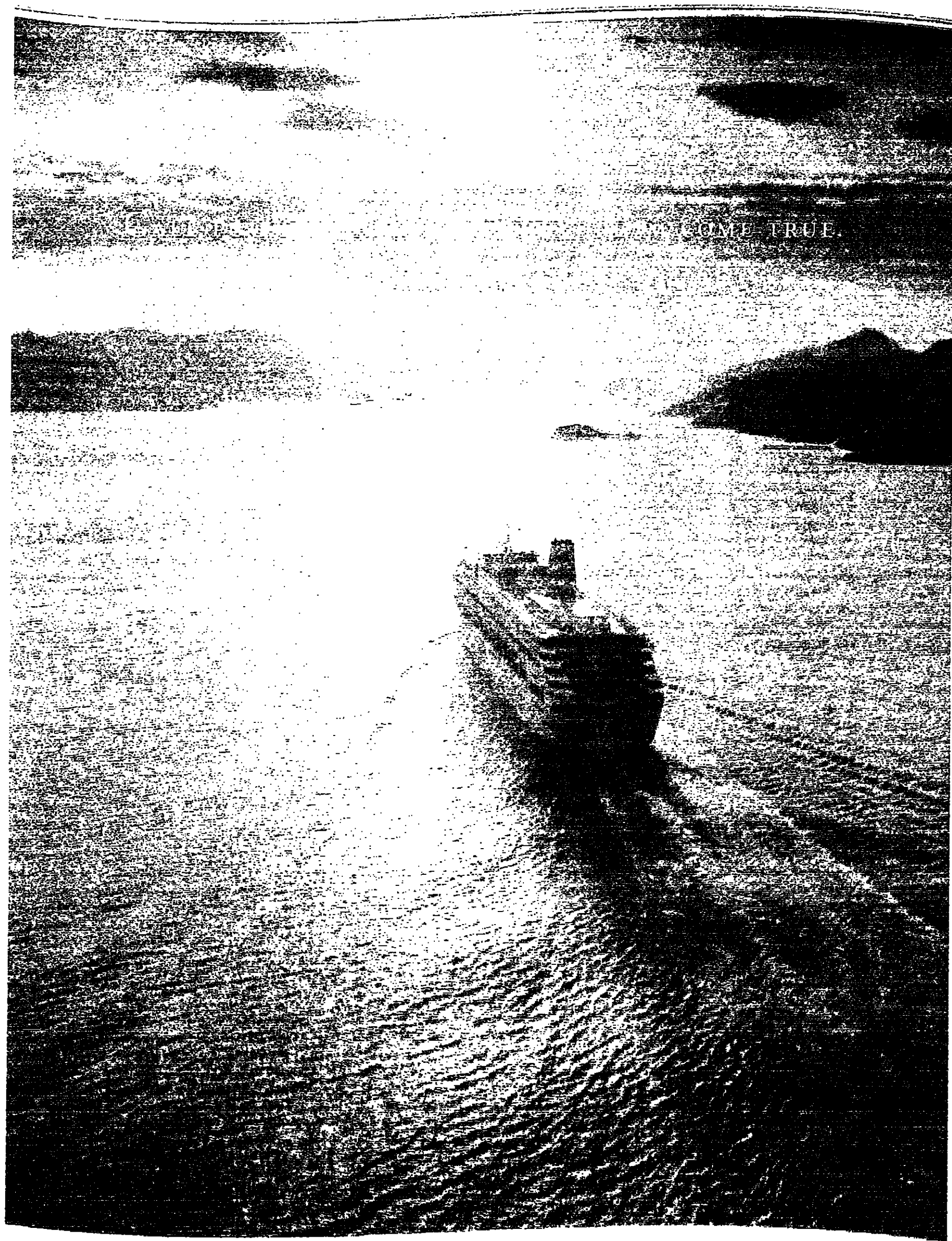
A GIRL aged 16 who disappeared from her home in South Wales on Christmas Eve walked into woods near by and hanged herself.

Stephanie Edmunds was missing from her home in Rhigos, near Aberdare, and was last seen waiting for a bus late on Tuesday afternoon. Her parents, Reginald and Diane, who had been awaiting news of her throughout Christmas Day and Boxing Day, identified her body at a hospital mortuary yesterday.

South Wales Police are trying to find anyone who may have seen Stephanie or who could give any information about her state of mind. They said that her death was not suspicious.

There were extensive searches over Christmas using a helicopter, tracker dogs and 100 volunteers. She was found in woodland about a mile from her home. The woodland borders on the back of the Edmunds' house.

Stephanie's brother, Philip, 18, said: "She was very popular and had loads of friends. She had everything in life to look forward to. None of the family can understand it."



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Match the quote with the face, and answer other brainteasers as Nigel Rees reviews 1996



"I'm pretty middle class"
"I can't answer that question. I'm too hungover"
"What me? Having affairs?"

THE SUNDAY TIMES tomorrow

No respite for nurses in the frontline of childcare

By JOHN YOUNG

FOR children who are seriously ill, Christmas brings little joy or comfort. Hospitals try to get them home over the holiday period, but for their families the festive season is overshadowed by worry.

Many are too ill to go home and for hospital staff there is little respite. At Guy's Hospital, in central London, the wards that comprise the Evelina Children's Hospital seem as busy as ever.

Carol Williams, clinical nurse specialist, is responsible for overseeing education, research and day-to-day practice among the nurses. When she joined the profession, student nurses underwent general training, and those who wanted to work with children then did a further six-month course. Now they choose one of five specialised disciplines, including paediatrics, at the registration stage, each of which involves a three-year diploma course.

Children's nurses must be able to communicate with their patients, Sister Williams said. "You have to be able to adapt the language you use

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and the tone of voice, otherwise the way you address, say, a four-year-old will be seen by a 12-year-old as patronising."

Flexibility is also needed, because in children's wards one cannot establish the sort

of routine possible with adults. The nurses must be constantly on the alert for what needs doing.

"Our nurses work hard and do extra shifts when needed. In return, they get time off



Curtis Kilby, 7 months, in the neurology ward of the Evelina Children's Hospital

Flu epidemic hits the North and the young

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

BRITAIN is in the grip of a flu epidemic, with the number of cases doubling since the beginning of December.

The latest figures issued by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), which monitors cases of flu, show that 128 people in every 100,000 are suffering a flu-like illness. There is no absolute definition of when an outbreak becomes an epidemic, but it is usually defined as any number over 100 cases per 100,000 people. December saw a sharp rise from 53 cases per 100,000 at the beginning of the month to 87 last week.

Such an increase of flu and flu-like illnesses is normal at this time of year and the present level is by no means out of the ordinary. In a bad year, more than 400 per 100,000 may be suffering at any time.

This month's figures show that the highest number of cases is in the North and that the age group worst affected is that between 15 and 24.

Three types of flu have been identified this winter: the Beijing A strain, responsible for the last serious epidemic in 1993, and the Singapore and Wuhan strains. The Wuhan strain is new and is responsible for typical flu symptoms of aching limbs and coughing and wheezing lungs. The flu vaccine made available this year is designed to give protection against all three strains. This year, active efforts have been made to discourage healthy younger people from receiving the vaccination in order to save supplies for those at greater risk.

Dr Douglas Fleming, head of the RCGP research unit in Birmingham that monitors the figures, said: "On balance we take the view that, for young fit people, an attack of influenza is the preferred option to having a vaccine every year." A bout of flu provides several years of good immunity against the particular strain responsible.

The evidence, however, is that about a quarter of the doses of vaccine go to people who fall outside the high-risk category — defined as people with chronic heart or chest complaints, chronic kidney disease, diabetes, lowered immunity or any other serious illness, as well as the elderly living in residential homes. Unlike even in this group is no better than about 50 per cent, even though research shows the vaccine is effective.

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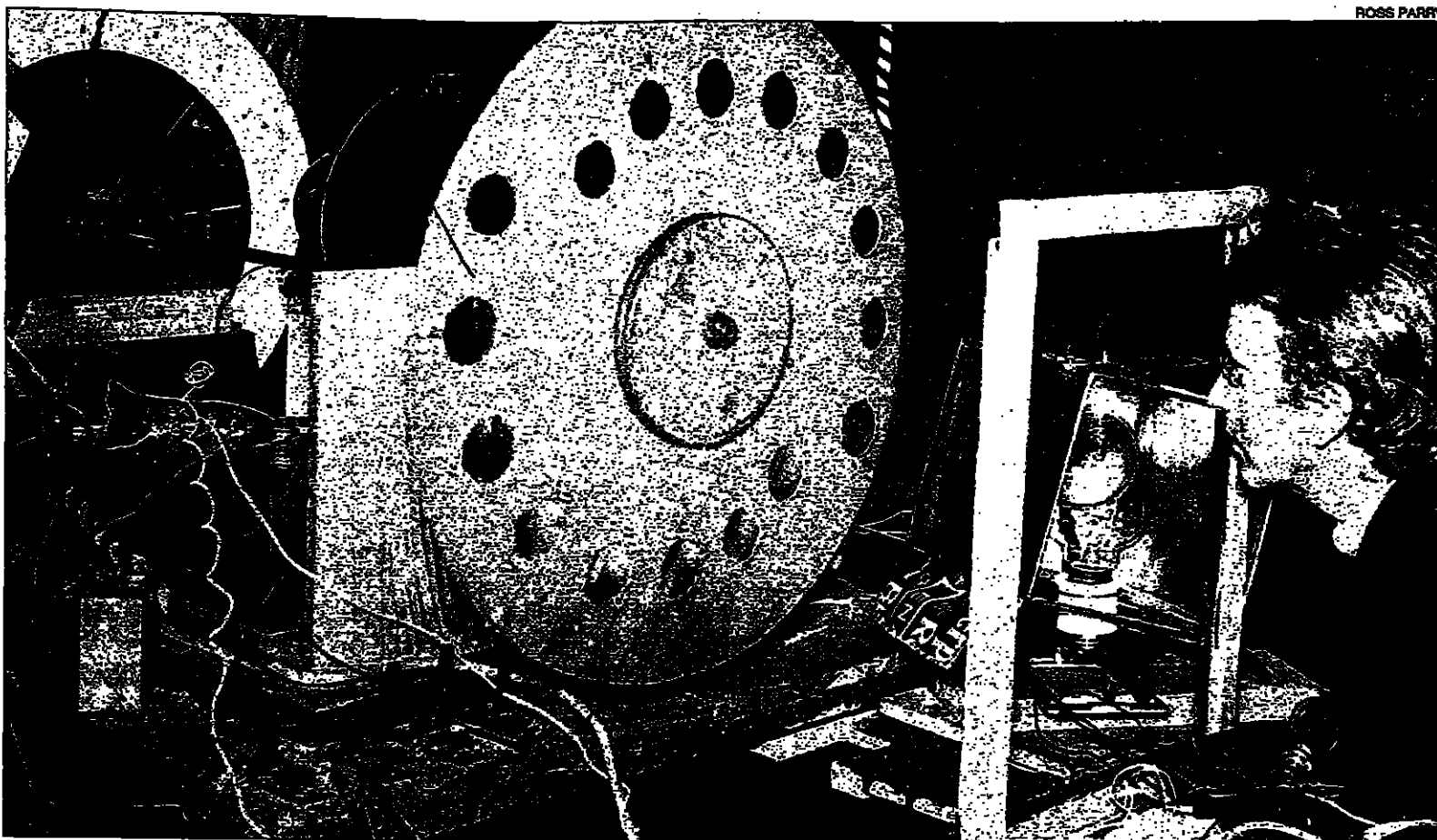
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Digital systems and low technology combine as experts work to reveal the details of the first video recording, made on 78rpm discs

Logie Baird's picture recording revealed by technical wizardry

70-year-old video gets its first play

By PAUL WILKINSON

EXPERTS have successfully played back the world's earliest video recordings for the first time since they were created almost 70 years ago.

They were made by John Logie Baird, the inventor of television, more than three decades before the world's first practical video recorder was made in America by the Ampex company in 1959. But the great Scottish inventor was never able to play back the three-minute recordings held on 78rpm discs because his equipment was not sophisticated enough.

Now, however, computer experts working for the Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, Yorkshire, have decoded the discs to reveal the first recordings of moving television pictures. "The hairs on the back of my head stood on end when I saw those pictures," said John Trenouth, the senior curator of television at the museum. "It was like the opening of



Logie Baird could not replay any of his recordings, including one of his secretary, Emily Pounsford

Tutankhamun's tomb." The recordings, which Baird made by a method called phonovision, date from about 1927, soon after he patented his television system.

One shows Emily Pounsford, a temporary secretary working for the inventor at his London studios in Long Acre. She tosses the ringlets in her

hair as she apparently talks to someone off-camera.

Others show Baird's assistant Wally with "Stookie" Bob, the head of a ventriloquist's dummy which was the first image broadcast by the inventor. The museum has played back all six of the experimental 13in discs known to exist, but Mr Trenouth is hopeful

that others might be uncovered.

Four are in private ownership, one was presented to the Science Museum by Baird in the 1930s and one is held by EMI, the successors to Columbia, who helped Baird's work.

Mr Trenouth said: "The signals from Baird's equipment were recorded on hot wax, just as sound recordings were made in those days, but it was impossible to play them back as the recording hiss and other background noise obscured the signal too much for his equipment. He was also unable to synchronise the pictures."

Elliot Levin, who has worked for the National Sound Archive, first transcribed the recordings on to digital tape and then Don Maclean, a computer expert with Hewlett Packard, cleaned up the images. "They both gave hours of their own time to achieve it," said Mr Trenouth. "Elliot took three hours just to position each disc correctly for replay, using a

microscope to place it exactly right."

"At first it was thought Miss Pounsford was smoking, but after enhancement it became clear that it was just interference."

Baird never saw recognisable images from these discs and to extract them 50 years after his death and enhance them to the point where you can see what he and his colleagues saw on the day of the recording is quite something. They are images from the grave, ghosts out of the air."

Healing society by the power of forgiveness

CHRIST can heal only those who know that they are sick. He wants to cure the sickness of those who are arrogant and self-righteous. His great cry is to those people who would cast the first stone. They are to stop and ask whether they are without sin themselves. When Peter asks how often he is to forgive someone, Jesus replies that he must do so an indefinite number of times.

The Nicene Creed proclaims the Christian faith and lists the beliefs on which life should be based. It is a call to action. One Christian action is the forgiveness of sins. That forgiveness is shown by the Son of God who became Man and died for our sins. Each man is made in the image of God. It is therefore every man's function not only to acknowledge the forgiveness of his own sins, once he has repented, but also to forgive others their sins.

A Christian believes in absolutes, but recognises that in attempting to reach them, he and every other person will fail and fail unless the power of God carries him. Even outside the Christian message there is a general recognition that life is about learning to rise ever more graciously each time one falls — as Samuel Beckett, who was an atheist, said in an interview.

Forgiveness does not have to mean forgetting. It does not mean that there should be no penance or making of amends. As in Gilbert and Sullivan, the punishment must fit the crime. Forgiveness does not abolish the consequences of sin or the need for them to be put right. In *The Dream of Gerontius*, the soul coming before God is so blinded and over-

Credo



Antony Sutch

Christ on the cross cried out: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." These are the words of the Messiah. We hear them again in that moment after his resurrection when Christ comes face to face with Peter who has denied him three times. There is no accusation or blame, no demand for explanation, but simply the same question three times: "Do you love me?"

The new Adam is not in the mould of the old Adam, who pointed his finger at Eve and said that she had made him do it. Then Eve pointed her finger at the serpent. Each passed the responsibility on to another. In the new order the individual must recognise his own need for help, and ask for forgiveness.

St Benedict in his Rule expects the individual to acknowledge his wrongdoing in the presence of the community. St Benedict thought this the best way for men to repair broken bonds. In the same way the Sacrament of Reconciliation is initiated by the person seeking forgiveness, who is then forgiven in the name both of God and of the community.

This latter is of enormous importance, since any fault affects everyone else. Sin is not a private zone, nor is the amending of it. Then comes the penance, and the recognition by the individual that forgiveness has been granted.

Forgiveness humanises the forgiven. It does exactly the same to the forgiver. This unexpected deepening of humanity is what a Christian action brings to us.

Dom Antony Sutch is Head Master of Downside School near Bath

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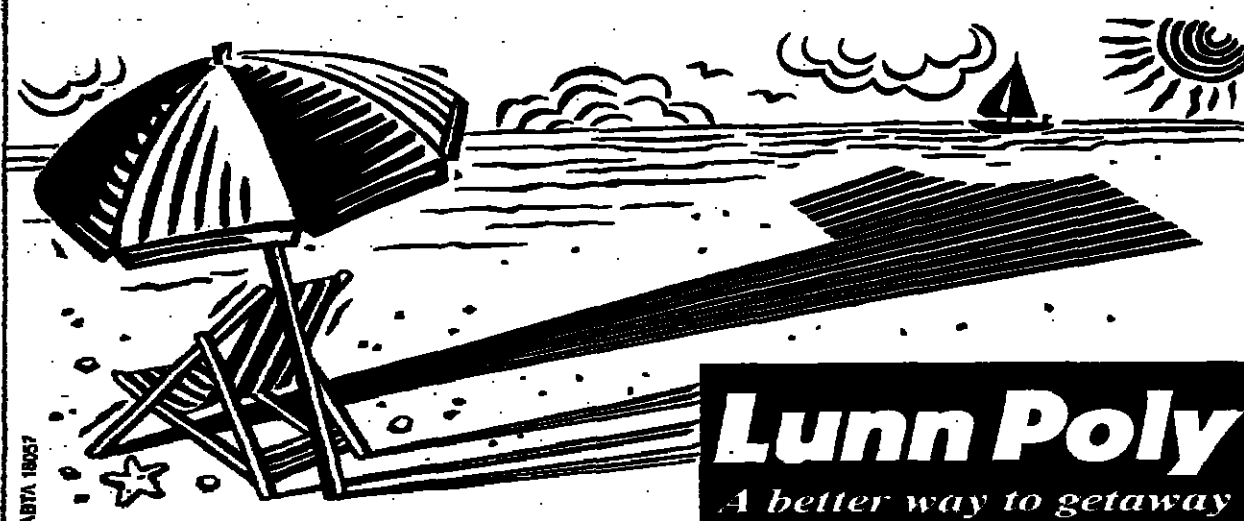
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Code will make solicitors come clean on charges

By FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

SOLICITORS will have to tell clients in advance what their charges are and the likely cost of any action under strict rules being drawn up by the Law Society. The code will also require them to say what their hourly rate is and explain any extra costs.

About 60 per cent of the 19,000 complaints each year to the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors, which has replaced the Complaints Bureau, relate in part or in total to costs. Despite efforts by the Law

Society to persuade its members to disclose charges, many still pay only lip service to the notion.

Tony Gilling, president of the Law Society, said: "Although at present solicitors are encouraged, as good practice, to disclose their charging rates, many are still not doing so in a way which meets the needs of clients." The new code, backed by sanctions, would enable clients to complain about inadequate professional services and obtain compensation or reductions in bills, he said.

David Hartley, head of solicitors' remuneration at the Law Society,

said: "The new code will make the obligations on solicitors clearer. At the moment, they are urged to give best information on costs — but beauty is in the eye of the beholder and solicitors can interpret this how they wish." The code, yet to go before the Law Society council, would encourage greater compliance and ensure that the public was given a clearer idea what costs were involved, he said.

There is increasing pressure for solicitors to make charging clearer, and for overall estimates where possible, from bodies such as the Legal Services Ombudsman and

the National Consumer Council. It was one of the hot topics at the Law Society conference in October.

Many solicitors insisted that it was not possible to estimate the costs of a piece of work, particularly with litigation. A number still did not quote an all-in hourly rate, instead citing their basic rate and then adding a "mark-up" on top, despite the irritation this caused among clients.

Large City law firms now frequently quote fixed, all-in rates for a specific piece of work because large companies expect it. Stuart Waterworth, team leader of client

relations at the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors said that one solicitor about whom a complaint was made boasted that "he was required to say that he charged by the hour, but not what the charge was".

Mr Waterworth cited the case of a woman who went to a solicitor with a complex matrimonial case. The firm quoted her an hourly rate of £75 and asked for £750 in advance. Some 20 months later, she got a bill for £8,000.

Their hourly rate had risen at regular intervals during the period, yet she had never been informed,"

he said. "At no stage did they give her an interim bill or any indication of what costs had been run up. She should have been told at least every six months, if not more often, how costs were mounting."

He said that many solicitors abided by the letter of the "best practice" guidance on costs, but not the spirit. In a briefing paper to the Law Society conference, his office noted that the public were now "more empowered than ever; they know their rights, are ready to complain if the service they receive is not up to scratch and are aware of most forms of redress". Time

and again Citizens' Advice Bureau asked why solicitors were so hesitant to give firm guidelines on likely charges and were so hesitant to provide information on costs, the office said.

"It does little good explaining to people that solicitors' charges are based on a range of factors and are often impossible to calculate from the outset. Clients are now demanding a more detailed analysis of the likely bill they are going to face and are less willing to accept bills which come out of the blue or do not at least reflect a verbal or written estimate."

Stay thin and live longer on a diet of beer

By DAVID CHARTER

ACADEMICS have mounted a stout defence of beer, which they say can prolong life, reduce the risk of heart disease and does not in itself make drinkers fat.

In the December issue of *Chemistry in Britain*, Professor David Williams and Jeremy Philpott, a researcher from the University of Wales, Cardiff, say beer brewed with spring water and hops is fat-free. Beer bellies are caused not by beer, but by its effect as an appetite stimulant, they say.

Professor Williams, Professor of Speciation and Analytical Chemistry, said: "You can go on a beer diet. There are fewer calories in some beers than there are in skimmed milk." His promotion of beer as a dietary aid extends only to "the occasional pint", however. "Those on a calorie-controlled diet still need to reduce their beer consumption, because the body preferentially burns the carbohydrates derived from beer rather than body fat."

He added: "The evidence to date shows that those who drink a pint a day have an expected lifespan a year or two longer than abstainers. The modest levels of alcohol in beer improve blood circulation, reducing the risk of heart disease for light drinkers compared with that for heavy drinkers and abstainers."

"When used as part of a balanced diet, beer is beneficial for human health, and the infrequent mishap resulting from a little over-indulgence is no reason to brand beer as contrary to our wellbeing."

He said the 93 per cent water content of beer more than compensated for the dehydrating effects of the alcohol. A pint provided protein and B vitamins, as well as 15g of carbohydrate from the barley and malt, while being virtually free of toxic metals. "Even when the few species of bacteria that can survive in beer are present, they generally compromise only the taste and appearance of the beer, rather than posing any serious risk to health."



Yvonne Fox is playing the heroine Jemima Nicholas, who captured 14 French troops. After the surrender, prisoners persuaded local girls to help them to escape.

Invaders hungry for encore of French farce

Two hundred years ago, Fishguard earned a place in history as the scene of the last armed invasion of Britain. Alan Hamilton reports on plans to commemorate the event

THE last armed invasion of Britain was severely weakened by too much food and drink, and surrendered after facing the local womenfolk. Two hundred years later, the French have willingly accepted an invitation to return to commemorate their defeat.

The French landing in west Wales in February 1797, during the Napoleonic Wars, was a blend of high farce and disaster, involving a shady American, a local heroine, the only British Army battle honour awarded for service in the home country, and first issue of paper money by the Bank of England.

A year of commemoration is planned at Fishguard, close to the landing site in Pembrokeshire. A leading role will be played by Yvonne Fox, warden of old people's sheltered housing in the town. Dressed in a traditional red cape and wielding a pitchfork, she will play Jemima Nicholas, a sizeable 47-year-old

cobbler who is said to have captured 14 French soldiers single-handed and to have terrified the rest into surrender by being mistaken for a reinforcement of King George's Redcoats.

A detachment of France's Napoleonic Association — which relives the dictator's campaigns — is to visit Fishguard in the summer to re-enact the surrender on Goodwick Sands, close to the ferry terminal for Ireland. Mike Woakes, director of the festivities, said: "We have said we are commemorating the event, not celebrating it. That enables us to invite the French, and they have accepted."

The invasion was intended to foment unrest, linking up with rebels in Bristol and Liverpool to ignite a peasants' revolt. A force of 1,400 released prisoners, ne'er-do-wells and other scallywags were assembled under the command of William Tate, an

American who had fought in the War of Independence but who had been forced to flee to Paris after trying to sell Florida to the French.

Four French ships were sighted in the Bristol Channel on February 22, apparently heading for Bristol. Bad weather and a lack of commitment apparently forced them to abandon the voyage. When they passed Fishguard, they decided to go there instead.

The local militia panicked and fired their eight-pounders from Fishguard fort. All the shots were blanks, as the fort had no ammunition. The fleet

turned tail, and at dead of night landed its troops on a headland two miles west.

The 1,400 scrambled ashore and set about foraging. Local farmhouses were well stocked with food and drink, partly because of a brisk local smuggling trade and partly because a local farmer had laid in copious supplies for his forthcoming marriage. By next morning, a substantial part of the invasion force was drunk and incapable, while local residents had melted into the distance.

Lord Cawdor, a wealthy landowner, mobilised a force

of 600 men, many armed only with scythes and pitchforks, with the Pembrokeshire Yeomanry. Then Jemima Nicholas and other women of the district came on the scene, looking fearsome in their tall Welsh hats and red capes, pitchforks at the ready.

Tate ordered his invasion force to advance, but the men turned their muskets on him, pointing out that they were now trapped, as the ships that had landed them had sailed away. Tate sent a message to Cawdor: "The circumstances under which the body of French troops under my command were landed at this place renders it unnecessary to attempt any military operations, as they will tend only to bloodshed and pillage."

Within 48 hours of the landing, Cawdor accepted the French surrender, popularly thought to have been signed in what is now the Royal Oak pub in Fishguard town centre. The encounter had resulted in the deaths of two Welshmen and the injury of one woman, who received a government pension of £40 a year for receiving a French musket ball in her leg. The *Times* reported four French casualties, three killed by farmers

who found them stealing cattle and bread.

News of the invasion sent jitters through an already nervous country and provoked such a run on the Bank of England by savers wishing to recover their gold sovereigns that the bank was forced for the first time to issue paper banknotes, in denominations of £1 and £2.

Cawdor and the Pembrokeshire Yeomanry were heroes, despite being spared the need to engage the enemy. They were long ago subsumed by merger and are now 224 (Pembroke Yeomanry) Squadron, Royal Logistic Corps (Volunteers), a Territorial Army unit with a distinction unmatched by any other unit of the British Army. The French were imprisoned in various jails until they could be exchanged for British prisoners of war.

A group in Pembroke jail befriended two Welsh girls, who helped 25 of them to escape. They stole Cawdor's yacht and sailed out to commandeer a merchantman to make their way home. At Cherbourg, they were unwelcome. They found themselves locked up again in their own country.

Vandals destroy fleet of 37 buses

Vandals wrecked 37 buses and smashed windows of six others after breaking into a depot in Bolton, over Christmas. Stagecoach Ribbles, the bus operator, said vehicles had been driven into each other and damage was estimated at £200,000. Services in Bolton and north Manchester were badly disrupted yesterday and replacement vehicles had to be brought in.

McAliskey wait

Roisin McAliskey, 25, daughter of the former MP Bernadette McAliskey, was further detained in custody until January 3. She faces deportation proceedings concerning a mortar attack on the Osnabrück barracks in Germany.

Hunt for killer

Police hunting the killer of a man outside a Portsmouth public house on Boxing Day are trying to trace another man seen running away afterwards. The victim, believed to be in his late 20s, was stabbed during an argument.

Record posted

Postmen in Scotland delivered 175 million Christmas cards and letters, beating last year's record by 22 million. Two billion cards were posted in Britain in the four weeks up to Christmas, compared with 1,867 million last year.

999 call attack

An ambulance answering a 999 call was rammed and stopped by teenage joyriders in the Twinbrook area of west Belfast. They shouted abuse and threw cans and objects at the crew but fled when taxi drivers came to the rescue.

English welcome

The Scottish Tourist Board is wooing the English in an attempt to increase spending by visitors north of the border. The spring campaign will feature posters on the London Underground, and television and newspaper advertisements.

Road evictions

Bailiffs arrived at dawn to evict about six protesters from a camp in the path of a £65 million scheme to improve the A30 in Devon. The protesters' treehouses at Allercombe, near Exeter, were pulled down and one person was arrested.

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Workers in one more 1997 tax bl

Loop-hole closed for motorbike learners

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Workers must toil for one more day before 1997 tax burden lifts

By Robin Young and Anne Ashworth

BRITONS will labour for 144 days in 1997 just to pay their taxes for the year. Tax Freedom Day, the date on which the average employee stops handing every penny of his wage packet to the Government and starts working for himself, will fall on Saturday, May 24, according to a report published today by the Adam Smith Institute, a free-market think-tank.

In 1996, 143 days were spent working for the Government to pay income tax, National Insurance, council tax and excise duties. The extra day results from the tax changes in last month's Budget.

The report says that, from June 1992 until May 1993, Tax Freedom Day generally, if gradually, moved earlier in the calendar. In 1982, the average taxpayer started to feel the benefit of his endeavours only on June 6. By 1993, Tax Freedom Day fell on May 15. According to the report, the date is now falling later in the year as a result of the Govern-

REAL PAY DAY

Tax freedom days (not including government borrowing)	
1965	April 29
1970	May 25
1975	May 27
1980	May 28
1985	June 1
1990	May 27
1993	May 15
1994	May 16
1995	May 21
1996	May 23
1997	May 24

ment's attempts to bring public-sector finances back into balance through higher taxation.

The report's author, Gabriel Stein, an economist and a director of Lombard Street Research, believes government borrowing should be added to the total burden of taxation, since it must eventually be paid for by future taxation. If this extra burden was included, Tax Freedom

Day 1997 would be postponed until Wednesday, June 4.

Though nearly 40 per cent of the national income will be taken in taxes in 1997, the United Kingdom has one of the lightest tax burdens in Europe. Ireland, Germany, Greece, Austria, France, Luxembourg, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and Denmark all impose heavier taxes. The European Union average for Tax Freedom Day (not including borrowing) is June 5, according to the institute's calculations. The most onerous tax regime, in Denmark, obliges citizens to work until the end of July before the burden lifts.

By contrast, many high-growth countries, including Switzerland and the United States, have a lighter tax burden than the United Kingdom. In Japan Tax Freedom Day falls as early as April 21. Tax Freedom Day 1997, by Gabriel Stein (ASI, 23 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BL; £14)



Darlington town centre: luring tourists from Malaysia with friendliness, an unhurried pace of life and an ever-changing countryside

Darlington: a welcome break from the tropical sun

By Emma Wilkins

ALONG the gentle fringes of the South China Sea, would-be adventurers are looking out on just another sunny day and dreaming of faraway places with something different and special to offer. Places like Darlington, for example.

The Mayor of the Co Durham town was celebrating yesterday after it was named as the top European tourist

attraction by an east Malaysian newspaper. A glowing, full-page tribute said: "The pace of life is less hurried, the people are friendly and helpful, and the traffic is less dense and the drivers are so polite." The countryside is an "ever-changing vista of emerald-green fields, ominous storm clouds and gaunt trees".

Gordon Plummer, the Mayor, is ready to welcome extra tourists as a result of the tribute, published to

highlight Malaysia Airlines' new link with Teesside Airport. He said: "We are very proud that all our hard work has paid off. We have pedestrianised the town centre and reclaimed the Market Square as a public space. We already have quite a few visitors from Asia and we will be happy to welcome any more."

The article, which also highlighted the town's contributions to world culture, such as the Quaker move-

ment and the railway pioneer George Stephenson, was discovered by Pete Sayers, 37, an abseiling instructor from Darlington, when he was handed a copy of the *Sark Tribune* during an internal Malaysian flight. Mr Sayers, who was in Borneo to instruct oil-rig workers on abseiling techniques, said: "When you are halfway around the world, you get a bit of a shock when you see your home town in the paper."

Loophole closed for motorbike learners

By Jonathan Prynn

THOUSANDS of learner motorcyclists have been told that they will be riding illegally unless they take a training course under rule changes effective from Wednesday.

Current laws give learners with full car licences exemption from having to take any test on motorcycles with engines up to 125cc. The loophole is being closed to prevent users of small bikes who also drive a car from becoming "permanent" learners.

The compulsory day-long basic training course will give those who pass the right to ride on the road with their L-plates on motorcycles of up to 125cc on either a provisional motorcycle licence or a full car licence. However, riders on mopeds with engines up to 50cc will still be able to ride without L-plates and without taking the course as long as they have a full car licence.

The training consists of a basic course in practical road and off-road riding skills under close supervision, and instruction in safety awareness. The Driving Standards Agency has written to all registered keepers of motorcycles up to 125cc telling them of the new regulation.

Dance sets record for the music industry

By a Staff Reporter

THE British recording industry is still thriving, with more records released this year than ever, according to figures released yesterday from the Entertainment Research and Analysis survey, covering all types of music.

Album releases were up 26 per cent at 16,148 since last year and single releases increased 16 per cent to 6,939. Ticket sales for concerts and festivals were also up.

Dance music accounted for well over half the singles released and more than one in ten albums, the survey in this week's *Music Week* magazine said. More than a fifth of albums were multi-artist compilations. The fastest growing areas were jazz, old favourites and the spoken word.

The Beatles seem ever-popular. As well as further anthologies, 13 CDs of interviews and 20 albums of Beatles songs performed by other acts came out.

The artist who released the most albums was the French singer Charles Aznavour, who put out 28. Twenty-five albums were released of the jazz saxophonist Charlie Parker, 23 of Duke Ellington and 21 of Billie Holiday.

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Misfortune tarnishes Monaco's fairytale family saga

Ill-fated
Grimaldis
celebrate
700 years
in power

FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN PARIS

THE House of Grimaldi, the dynasty of Monaco, celebrates its 700th anniversary as the longest-reigning royal family in Europe next month with a series of events designed to show there is a small patch of heaven on earth — at least for the very, very rich.

Prince Rainier III, the white-haired patriarch and absolute ruler of the tiny principality covering 450 acres on the shores of the Mediterranean, will preside over the festivities: his soldiers in their splendid Ruritanian uniforms will march around "the Rock"; many toasts will be drunk and money will be gambled and forgotten in the casinos of Monte Carlo.

The 30,000 residents of Monaco will thank their stars (and accountants) to be living under such a wise and generous ruler, in a land where the sun and sea are warm, the champagne is cold, republicanism and crime are unknown and where, unless you have the misfortune to be French, the taxman never calls.

But behind the pomp and fairytale fantasy presided over by His Serene Highness, all is not quite serene in the minuscule monarchy. The Grimaldi clan is emerging from a grim recent past into a future that is, at best, uncertain.

Prince Rainier, Louis-Henri-Maxence-Bertrand, thirty-third Prince of Monaco, has



Prince Rainier with Princess Caroline, centre, and Princess Stephanie, far right, with Caroline's children, Andrea, far left, Pierre and Charlotte. Prince Albert stands behind the group

already undergone one heart by-pass operation and rumours of his imminent abdication have been rife for more than two years. He has said he will discuss the accession only after next month's celebrations.

The monarch's son and heir apparent, Prince Albert, has shown a marked disinclination to marry and perpetuate the dynasty, despite having road-tested scores of potential spouses, according to gossip. Princess Stephanie has just emerged from one of the most controversial marriages and nastiest divorces ever to undermine a throne.

Her elder sister, the once beautiful, twice-married, once-widowed Princess Caroline, has apparently lost her hair:

whether through cancer treatment, stress or some other reason, is unknown.

In a newspaper interview last week Prince Albert, 38, said he regretted that the image of Monaco was so closely associated with the fortunes (and misfortunes) of the royal family. It was a naive remark, because for all his touting of Monaco's economic

potential, its history is the story of the Grimaldis: pure, but seldom simple.

Ever since Grace Kelly, the actress, married Prince Rainier in 1956, the principality has survived on a sheen of glamour. But Princess Grace knew how to temper Hollywood vulgarity and the greed and wealth that cluster around the gaming tables of

Monte Carlo with more attractive interests and projects: charities, a dance school, and a hospital. Her death in a car crash in 1982 deprived the principality of more than its prettiest face.

At 73, Prince Rainier, Europe's longest-serving monarch, maintains his dignity, but the image of the younger Grimaldis is not one to thrill

the Monegasques, although they are much too loyal (and know too well what is good for them) to say so.

The younger Grimaldis may condemn the paparazzi who have given them acres of coverage and endless humiliation, but their own tastes seem unshakably tabloid. It was thus somewhat unsurprising to find Princess Stephanie's hus-

band, the fishmonger-turned-bodyguard-turned-businessman Daniel Ducruet, gracing the pages of Italian magazines earlier this year in *flagrant* with a former "Miss Topless Belgium".

Bad luck has played a part in the saga — as in the death of Caroline's second husband in a speedboat accident — but so has bad taste. Prince Albert,

having torn himself away from a career as a bobsleigher, is now favouring a more sober image as the prospect of his accession looms. This week he talked of the importance of "tradition, stability, independence and the preservation of national identity".

"Today the principality continues to be a beacon, in the artistic, cultural and economic realms," he declared. Then he went to an official dinner in Rome to mark the opening of a Grimaldi museum exhibition with, as his chosen beacon of tradition and culture, Claudia Schiffer, the supermodel.

Descended from Genoese corsairs, the Grimaldi clan might be more attractive if they were more piratical. But their activities seem instead to have all the colour and unpredictability of a *Hello!* magazine interview.

The swashbuckling François Grimaldi defeated the Ghibellines to take possession of Monaco on January 8, 1297, and apart from a brief annexation during the French Revolution, the dynasty has remained firmly in place ever since. Now much of his descendants' swash seems to have gone out their buckle.

The money still sloshes into Monaco, and the line from the palace is that it will eventually rival other major tax-havens. But much will depend on the next generation.

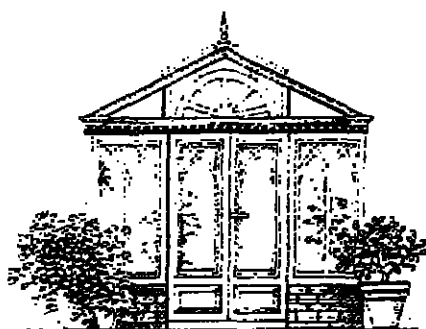
The Grimaldi family motto is *Deo Juvante* (With God's Help). After more than a decade of almost uninterrupted scandal, they may need all the divine help they can get.

Leading article, page 19



Fairytale wedding: Prince Rainier and Grace Kelly exchange marriage vows in Monaco in 1956

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Thai business link fuels Clinton funding row

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

A THAI-AMERICAN businesswoman who was a heavy Clinton campaign contributor and a frequent visitor to the White House emerged yesterday as a central figure in the growing furor over improper fund-raising.

In June, Pauline Kanchanalak took top officials from a Thai business conglomerate with large investments in China to meet Mr Clinton for coffee. The main topic of conversation during the hour-long meeting was American policy towards China.

On the same day Mrs Kanchanalak and her sister-in-law contributed \$135,000 (£82,000) to the Democratic National Committee. The committee has since returned a total of \$250,000 to Mrs Kanchanalak after she admitted the money was actually given by her mother-in-law. Election laws forbid donations made in another's name.

These disclosures raise new questions about whether wealthy Asians who could neither vote in the American election nor contribute to the campaign were, in effect, buying access to Mr Clinton and whether foreign policy was being unduly influenced. White House officials deny both suggestions, but the issues will be raised by Republicans at Congressional hearings in the new year. In addition, the Justice Department

has a wide-ranging task force investigating Democratic campaign contributions.

Mrs Kanchanalak, an American resident, helped to establish the US-Thai Business Council for trade promotion. As a major Democrat donor, she visited the White House at least 26 times during Mr Clinton's first four years for dinners, lunches and other events. On the coffee morning, she took along two officials from the business council and three executives from C.P. Group Ltd of Bangkok — a business empire with control of 250 companies in more than 20 countries. One of the trio was Dhanin Chearavanont, chairman of C.P. Group, who has been described as the

twelfth richest man in Asia.

Lanny Davis, White House special counsel, said he could not comment on the propriety of inviting foreign executives to a meeting for supporters of the DNC. He insisted that "to the best of our knowledge" no funds were solicited in the White House, which would have been illegal. Mrs Kanchanalak has declined to comment. The scope of the Democrats' fund-raising through Asian connections is proving an embarrassment at the start of Mr Clinton's second term. The President has already described his meeting at a coffee morning with a Chinese arms dealer, whose company was later implicated in weapons smuggling, as inappropriate. He has ordered a tighter screening of visitors.

The Democratic National Committee has accepted there were transgressions and has returned at least \$1.2 million in questionable contributions.

The White House has sent back another \$640,000 in dubious donations intended to help Mr and Mrs Clinton to pay legal bills incurred by Whitewater and other investigations into their alleged abuses of power. The fund-raising excesses point to overzealousness by John Huang, a Chinese-American.

The burgeoning ruckus is generating a host of way-out conspiracy theories. Right-wing critics have even questioned why Mr Clinton recently created a national park in an area of Utah that has huge reserves of coal. They suggest it was to help the Lippo Group, an Indonesian conglomerate with large coal-mining interests that has been linked to million-dollar contributions to Democrats.

Leases on the Utah coal were held by Andalex Resources, a British family concern. Its chairman, Peter Green, lives in Bermuda. A company spokesman said while Mr Clinton's decision to create the park was a disappointment, they did not believe that helping Lippo was the reason.

Anger over poll fraud

Santa Ana, California: Nineteen people told a newspaper they voted in the House of Representatives election, although they did not hold American citizenship. In the poll, Bob Dornan, a conservative Republican, lost a bid for a tenth term to a Democratic newcomer by less than 1,000 votes.

The 19 acknowledged that they had not completed the naturalisation process, which is required before a person can vote, the Los Angeles Times reported yesterday.

Mr Dornan claims that hundreds of people who should not have voted did so, costing him re-election. He was beaten by Loretta Sanchez, the daughter of Mexican immigrants.

The pugnacious Orange County Republican said on Thursday that a new election should be held because of voter fraud. The newspaper reported that 18 of the 19 voters were taking citizenship classes with Hermandad Mexicana Nacional, an immigrant-rights group. (AP)



Doll eats girl's hair

A hairdresser and an assistant work to remove a battery-operated Cabbage Patch Doll that had munched about eight inches of Sarah Stevens's hair and became caught in the seven-year-old's scalp. The doll had to be taken apart piece by piece in the salon in Griffith, Indiana, when it

would not let go. It took 30 minutes to remove more than 20 screws, open the battery compartment and pull apart the mouth to free Sarah's blond hair. Sarah was shaken but unhurt. "I have a little headache," she

said. The Cabbage Patch Snack Time Kids Doll is designed to chew automatically when plastic French fries or other items are placed in its mouth. It has no on-off switch. Glenn Bozarth, a spokesman for

the doll's maker, Mattel Inc, said the toy was safe and that he knew of no other complaints. He added that it was hard to imagine such a thing happening unless the child stuck her hair into the doll's mouth. Sarah, asked whether she wanted another one of the dolls, answered with an unequivocal "Yeah". (AP)

Real millionaires spurn luxury, study shows

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

IF YOUR neighbour backs a new Mercedes out of his mansion driveway each morning, do not assume he is a millionaire. He is more likely to be the type known in Texas as "Big hat, no cattle" — more show than substance — according to a new book on America's wealthiest people.

Real dollar millionaires are more likely to drive second-hand cars, wear suits bought at discount stores, and sit at the kitchen table with their wives clipping special offer coupons, says the survey. "Most of the truly wealthy in this country don't live in Beverly Hills or Park Avenue

— they live next door." The *Millionaire Next Door*, by Thomas Stanley and William Danko, two academics from New York State University who specialise in the study of rich people, is designed to help "hard-working, well-educated, high-income people" who wonder why they do not have more money in the bank.

Out of America's 100 million households, 3.5 million have assets worth \$1 million (£625,000) or more. In an apparent confirmation of the American Dream, the authors say that four-fifths of these people have made their money in one generation. They tell a

moral tale of discipline and self-denial.

"It is seldom inheritance or advanced degrees or even intelligence that builds fortunes in this country," they argue, but the result of hard work, saving and spending less than you earn. In their survey, millionaires tended to answer "yes" to three questions:

- ☐ Are you very frugal?
- ☐ Were your parents very frugal?
- ☐ Is your spouse more frugal than you?

Bill Gates, founder of the Microsoft computer empire, and Wall Street junk bond

dealers may catch the headlines, but American millionaires tend to have made their money in distinctly unglamorous businesses such as welding contractors, pest controllers, paving contractors, and stamp dealers.

A typical millionaire would be a 57-year old man, married with three children. One in five is retired; of those working, about two-thirds are self-employed. Half of the wives of millionaires do not work; if they do, they teach.

People of English descent, a tenth of the population, make up a fifth of all millionaires with German descendants

narrowly behind. But head for head, people of Scottish descent are most likely to be millionaires.

The authors have not surveyed many Asian entrepreneurs. But they include a warning for new immigrants: the longer an ethnic group has been in America, the less likely it is to produce millionaires, as people are rapidly seduced by the taste for high consumption. To help your children cultivate the same values, never tell them that you are rich.

☐ The Millionaire Next Door, published by Longstreet Press, Atlanta, Georgia.

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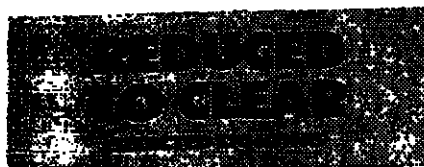
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White rhinos: an endangered species

Vets hunt runaway rhino in Louisiana

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

A WHITE rhinoceros, one of only 6,000 worldwide, was shot in Louisiana after it escaped from a private zoo and charged veterinary surgeons trying to tranquillise it.

The pregnant three-and-a-half-tonne female broke through a metal fence shortly before dawn on Thursday at the Zoo of Acadiana in Brossard after fighting with a male rhino. The renegade rhino was spotted crossing the US90 highway by a local sheriff's deputy. When three vets armed with tranquilliser guns caught up with her in a car park, Casey Lamb, a curator from the Baton Rouge Zoo, tried to fire a tranquilliser dart. "I was very close to getting a clear shot. But at the last minute, the rhino bolted and went right toward my back-up, who had the kill rifle," he said. "He had no alternative but to shoot to protect his own life."

The frightened rhino got within 15ft of Eric White, a vet at the Acadiana zoo, before he shot her between the eyes. "He was so shook up I took the rifle and finished her off," said Ron Cline, the zoo's curator.

The number of white rhino in the wild has been dwindling because of poachers seeking its horn for traditional oriental medicine. A native of southern Africa, the animal is one of the world's most endangered species.

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Israelis prepare for war against Syria 'next year'

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

THE Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has asked for a substantial increase in the defence budget as some senior military officials began preparing for a war with Syria next year.

In an interview published yesterday, Mr Netanyahu said: "I believe that in the future, after we stabilise the economy and put it back on the right track, we will be able to substantially increase the defence budget." Although he did not link his comments with Syria, Israeli defence officials have made clear the army needs more money to prepare for the possibility of war.

Major-General Matan Vilnai, the army Deputy Chief of Staff, said on Thursday: "The working estimate for 1997 is that we can find ourselves in a military confrontation with Syria. This year we are directing our training ... to stand against the Syrian Army."

The Israeli army Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General Am-

non Lipkin-Shahak, yesterday took his deputy to task, saying the Jewish state was not close to war with Syria. He added that there was always a theoretical danger of war but said alarmist statements must cease.

His assessment, however, does not tally with other senior Israeli military figures, including the head of air force intelligence, who said at the beginning of the week that the probability of war could no longer be characterised as low and that Syria remained "Israel's number one confrontation state".

Relations between the two countries have been tense since September, when Syria moved thousands of its troops in Lebanon to within striking distance of Israeli army positions on the Golan Heights. Syria is demanding that the strategic area, captured during the 1967 war, be handed back as part of any peace treaty with the Jewish state.

General Vilnai said Israel had changed its attitude to-

wards the Syrians since that troop deployment. He said after that Israeli defence forces had undergone "a massive improvement in readiness for war, which finds expression in the intensification of the training on land, sea and air, in an improvement of the stocks in the emergency warehouses, and in military training exercises that, for the most part, take place in the Golan Heights".

He insisted that the probability of war was definitely higher than a year or two ago. "We will do everything we can so a war does not break out, but mistakes happen," he said. "Wars also break out as a result of misunderstandings, and that is why we have already diverted budgets of hundreds of millions of dollars from the foreign [American] aid in order to improve our preparedness for war."

Last week Syria signalled it was ready to resume peace talks next month for the first time since Mr Netanyahu's May election. The stumbling block is Syria's insistence that the talks start where they left off with the previous Government, which had been willing to give back at least part of the Golan Heights in exchange for peace. Mr Netanyahu has said that no part will be returned.

Washington: President Clinton and Mr Netanyahu are expected to meet early in the new year to discuss peace efforts on the West Bank, the White House said yesterday (Ian Brodie writes).

Two weeks ago, Mr Clinton upset the Israeli leader by describing settlements there as an obstacle to peace. Mr Netanyahu's request for a quick meeting to clear the air was turned down.

Mr Clinton's attitude softened after Dennis Ross, his Middle East special envoy, prodded the Israelis and Palestinians into an agreement over the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Hebron.



Opposition MPs settle down to "sleep" in the national assembly yesterday to protest against the ruling party members who passed a labour law in their absence

Million South Koreans hold strike over new labour law

FROM REUTERS IN SEOUL

NURSES walked off hospital wards, shipyards were idle and thousands of militant unionists protested in Seoul yesterday as more than a million people were called out on strike.

Anxious residents in the South Korea capital braced themselves for transport chaos today as subway drivers — who usually ferry more than four million passengers a day — voted to join the stoppages.

The biggest shock was a decision by the usually docile Federation of Korean Trade Unions to confront the Government over the passage of a

tough labour law. The Federation said a 24-hour strike from noon yesterday would be extended until the end of the year — and possibly beyond.

That move threatens to bring out about 1.5 million workers. On Thursday the more militant Korea Confederation of Trade Unions had instructed its 500,000 members to down tools. While union members account for less than 20 per cent of the workforce, they command the economy's heights. Production of cars and ships — two big foreign exchange earners — has virtually halted.

Leather-clad motorcyclists roared in protest through the southeast city of Ulsan, home of the Hyundai Group, makers of "everything from computer chips to ships". They waved banners and sounded motorcycle horns.

Meanwhile riot police watched warily as 15,000 workers donned red headbands and gathered in Seoul's financial district, shouting anti-government slogans.

Han Seung-soo, the Finance Minister, said the law protected jobs by making South Korea's economy more flexible and thus more competitive.

Guatemala marks end to 36 years of civil war

FROM AGENCY FRANCE-PRESS IN GUATEMALA CITY

RADIO broadcasts urged people to drape their houses with white banners to give Guatemala's capital a festive look as it prepared to mark the end of 36 years of bloodshed in Latin America's longest civil war.

Tomorrow at 11pm GMT, the chiefs of three of the four rebel groups comprising the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) movement and an official from the fourth group will sign a peace treaty with the conservative Government of President Arzu.

Three left-wing rebel commanders, Rolando Morán, Carlos González and Pablo Moncada, are expected to arrive in the capital today. Another top commander, Gaspar Ilom, will be represented by his lieutenant.

Senior Ilom, son of Miguel Ángel Asturias, the 1967 Nobel Prize-winning author, has had his reputation tarnished by his group's alleged links to the kidnapping of a wealthy woman several months ago. The incident threatened to derail the five-year peace negotiations just as they seemed to be bearing fruit.

The evening ceremony at the national palace is expected to draw delegations from scores of countries including Spain, Mexico, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Sweden, Colombia and Cuba.

In Lima on Thursday, left-wing guerrillas occupying the Japanese Ambassador's residence released José María Argueta, the Guatemalan Ambassador to Peru, in an apparent gesture of goodwill in recognition of the peace process.

The signing is a major step in the campaign to end the civil war. Since it began in November 1960, an estimated 150,000 people have died and 50,000 have disappeared. Hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans, most of them indigenous, have been displaced or forced into exile.

The Government and the URNG signed a ceasefire in Oslo on December 4 and another agreement, on constitutional reforms, in Stockholm on December 7.

China jails Tibetan for spying

Peking: China has jailed a Tibetan Fulbright scholar for 18 years for spying. Ngawang Choephel, 30, touring Tibet to produce a documentary about folk music and dance, was detained in August 1995.

A local report, monitored by the BBC, said the scholar had confessed to having been sent by "the Dalai Lama clique" to conduct espionage activities "under the pretext of collecting information on Tibetan folk songs and dances". (Reuters)

Taleban forces take airbase

Islamabad: Taleban captured the main opposition airbase of Bagram, north of Kabul, the Afghanistan Press, said. The Pakistan-based news service said Taleban forces entered Bagram — killing at least 50 opposition fighters — after capturing the nearby opposition stronghold of Qarabagh. (Reuters)

Kenyan police shoot rustlers

Nairobi: Security forces have shot six more bandits who were blamed for the killing of a German tourist during a cattle raid in northern Kenya. This brings the total number of rustlers killed so far this week to 11. The Kenyan press reported, The tourist died when the vehicle he was in encountered rustlers crossing a road with cattle. (AFP)

Coma ends for Memphis killer

New York: James Earl Ray, the convicted killer of Martin Luther King Jr in Memphis, has emerged from his coma "with a big grin" after suffering liver and kidney damage (James Bone writes). Doctors said his condition was serious, not critical, but he had only a 10 per cent chance of survival.

Storm toll 'worst in Malaysia'

Kota Kinabalu: A Malaysian rescue team searched for victims of a Christmas Day storm that hit the eastern state of Sabah and killed at least 109 people, mostly Indonesians, and left as many missing. A Government minister said it was the worst disaster to affect the country. (Reuters)

Pray now, pay later

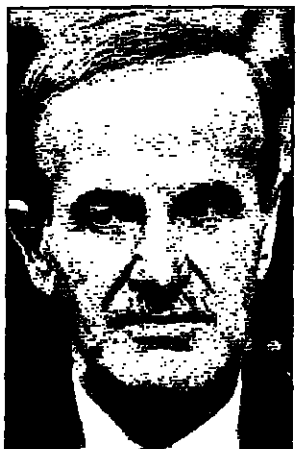
Madrid: A church in northern Spain has scrapped its traditional collection plate in favour of a credit card machine for contributions after Mass (Tunku Varadarajan writes). The system was installed yesterday at the church of San Claudio, in León.

Assad 'exiles brother over illegal activities'

PRESIDENT ASSAD of Syria has exiled his younger brother, Jamil, to France because his illegal activities endangered both Syrian and foreign business leaders, according to a Kuwaiti newspaper, al-Rai al-Aam.

The paper, citing "very well-informed" diplomats in Paris, said yesterday that Jamil's family and close friends had been forced to join him in France.

Jamil owned a shipping and a trading firm. He and his sons were involved "in a number of illegal activities in Syrian seaside towns". His son-in-law, who heads a state construction company, was fired, the paper said. (AFP)



Assad: had complaints from businessmen

Rebel 'messengers' held after leaving Lima siege

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI IN LIMA

TWO suspected Tupac Amaru rebels were arrested in Lima yesterday after apparently leaving the besieged Japanese Ambassador's residence "hidden" among a group of freed hostages.

One apparently left with 225 hostages on Sunday, and the other escaped on Christmas Day. Police said they had been sent out as messengers to rebels outside the building.

Earlier, Japan called for help from leaders of the Group of Seven industrialised nations — Britain, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, America and Japan — to solve the hostage crisis, in which 103 people are at the mercy of 20 terrorists who have explosives strapped to them.

Yukihiko Ikeda, the Japanese Foreign Minister, said it was a "matter of course that the international community agree not to tolerate terrorism". It was necessary to co-

operate to achieve a peaceful release of the hostages as soon as possible.

The G7 responded with a communiqué issued in France, saying the countries were "prepared, individually and collectively, to help the Peruvian Government by using all the appropriate means that it could request".

Among those facing their eleventh day in captivity in Lima are Morihisa Aoki, the Japanese Ambassador, 30 Japanese businessmen and security officials.

Mr Ikeda's request backed a call made earlier by President Yeltsin for the G7 nations to agree on a joint plan to

solve the crisis. But he ruled out Mr Yeltsin's offer of sending a Russian anti-terrorist squad to storm the residence, which is considered Japanese territory. Mr Yeltsin had contacted President Fujimori of Peru and had sent letters to all the G7 leaders, proposing "setting up a joint headquarters" with Russia to intervene to end the hostage drama.

Japan wants to avoid storming the building, although a team of SAS anti-terrorist experts and a US Delta Force squad are now in Lima. Officially they are there to advise Peruvian security forces, but according to Western diplomats, they are on

stand-by for action when required.

There has been a flurry of releases since the takeover, but they all seem to be part of a wider tactic by the terrorists.

The last to be freed was José María Argueta, the Guatemalan Ambassador, on Thursday. It was a gesture to mark the end of a 36-year-old civil war in the central American country.

The rebels also freed the Uruguayan Ambassador a day earlier, after a court in Montevideo released two suspected Tupac Amaru terrorists who had been accused of kidnapping businessmen for ransom in Uruguay. The apparent deal struck by the

Uruguayan Government infuriated President Fujimori, who recalled his ambassador.

Señor Fujimori hopes to crack the resolve of the rebels over time. He sent the Bishop of Ayacucho, Monsignor Juan Luis Cipriani, into the residence to sway the rebels "spiritually", and his daughter, Keiko Sophia, delivered Christmas gifts.

The rebel leader, Nestor Cerna Cartolini, alias "Comandante Evaristo", hung a sign in a window saying: "Thank you, Happy Christmas". But he said on radio that he would not release the hostages alive unless hundreds of his comrades were freed from prison.



A member of the rebel coalition group seeks support before the peace treaty is signed

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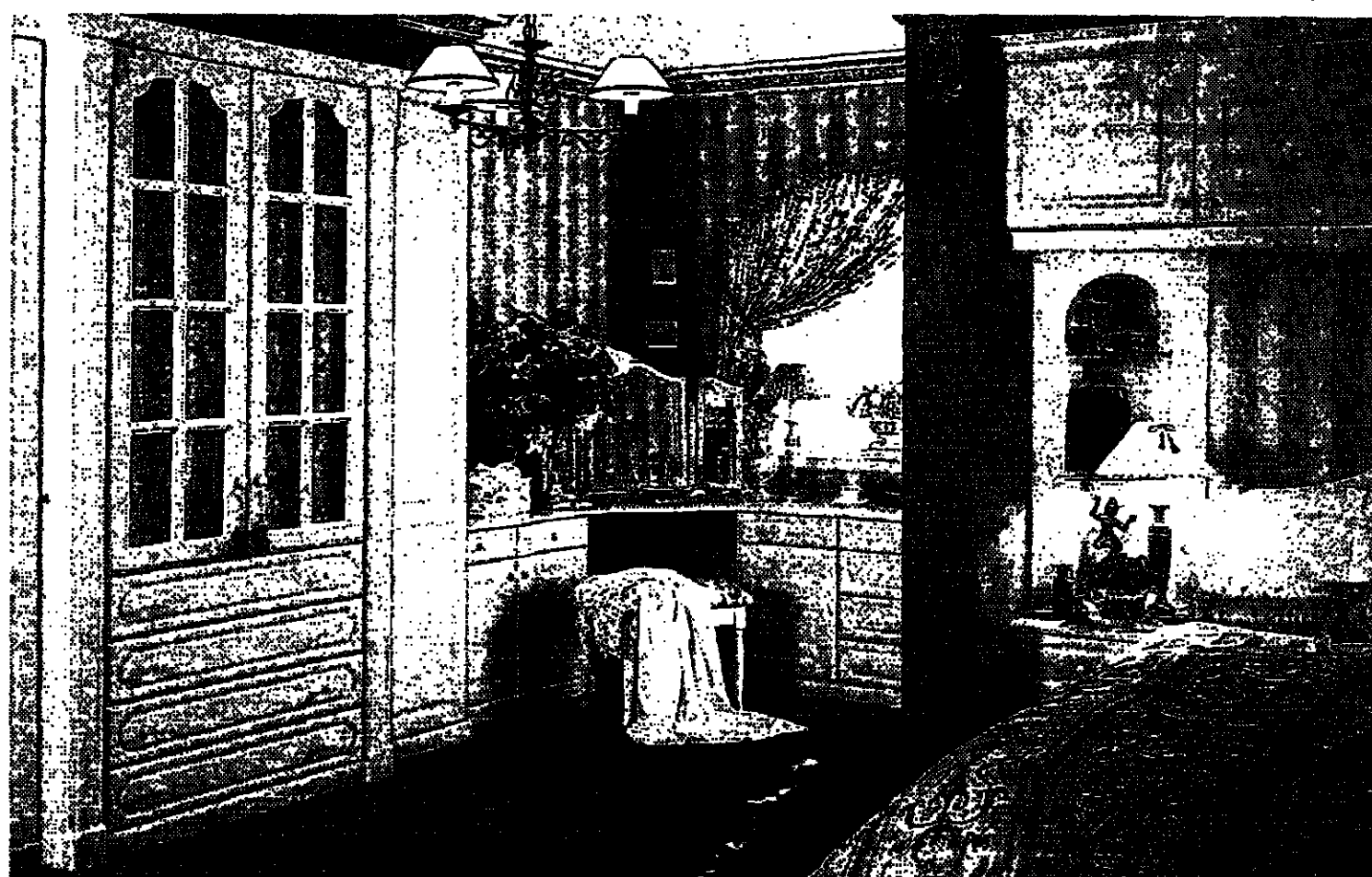
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Human brain 'warned of quake tremors'

By AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE IN SYDNEY

HUMAN brains can detect pre-quake tremors which seismologists cannot, according to two Australian radiographers.

They say that corrupted images shown on a computer-aided tomography scan of a psychiatric patient taken 17 minutes before a fatal earthquake wrecked the New South Wales town of Newcastle in 1989 were caused by a pre-quake tremor undetected by seismologists.

"If you really nail it down it is the first ever demonstration of a pre-quake tremor by non-seismological means," Lindsay Rowe, one of the radiographers at the Newcastle hospital, said yesterday.

The quake, measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale, struck the city, 100 miles north of Sydney, in December 1989 at 10:28am. Twelve people died and hundreds were injured.

Mike Grayson, the hospital's chief radiographer, was conducting the scan at 10:00 am. The Medical Journal of Australia reported that he noticed unusual streaks appearing on scans taken at 10:11 am. The scan was completed at 10:20 am.

The earthquake struck eight minutes later, destroying the scanning room but leaving the patient and staff unscathed.

In the journal's December issue, Mr Grayson says: "We believe the corrupted images were caused by a pre-quake tremor that was undetected by seismologists."

Mr Rowe said it could be argued that the brain's reaction was similar to the instinct in many animals that alerted them to natural disasters before they happened. "If I ever saw that image on a screen again, I'd be the first out of the building."

Opposition did win Serbia poll, say monitors

By PETER CAPELLA IN GENEVA AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THOUSANDS of anti-government protesters danced and sang in the centre of Belgrade yesterday to celebrate after an Organisation for Co-operation and Security in Europe (OSCE) fact-finding mission backed opposition claims that it had won recent local elections.

However, the demonstrators then clashed with riot police after jeering at them as the protest broke up. Witnesses said the cordons of police, some in plain clothes, used batons in street fights.

At least one person was beaten unconscious and a man who said he was walking home from a medical conference received a head-wound, witnesses said. A mother and her daughter, aged 12, were caught in the skirmishes and slightly injured. Two foreign television crews were attacked and had cameras smashed.

A reporter from the independent Radio Index said: "It seems riot police are intervening in response to jeering. No other provocation took place."

Felipe Gonzalez, the former Spanish Prime Minister, representing the OSCE, confirmed opposition victories over President Milosevic and his ruling Socialist Party in a series of disputed municipalities, where the results were annulled by Serbian courts.

He said that official electoral acts, signed by all political forces in Serbia, clearly stated that the Zajedno opposition coalition had won in 13 towns as well as in nine districts in Belgrade.

"It is my opinion that both the authorities and all political forces in Yugoslavia must accept and abide by the results of the local elections of November 17," he said in a statement issued in Geneva.

He dismissed the subsequent cancellation by Serbian courts of the results in municipalities won by opposition candidates as invalid. "The tribunals accepted allegations to cancel the elections that no

democratic country could have accepted." He added that it was also clear that the ruling Socialist Party and its allies won the majority of votes in the election as a whole.

Mr Milosevic, who invited the OSCE mission to Belgrade a week ago, was expected to respond early next week in time for a full meeting of the 55-nation security alliance in Vienna. Señor Gonzalez called on the organisation to issue an urgent appeal to the Yugoslav authorities to uphold the poll and to engage in dialogue with the Opposition.

As the announcement was made, about 80,000 demonstrators defied a police ban and gathered in Belgrade for the 38th day in succession. They danced and cheered the report, which added weight to mounting international demands that Mr Milosevic respect democracy.

"This is a big test for Milosevic. If he rejects this opinion, he will return to the greatest isolation of the past three to four years," Zoran Djindjic, a senior opposition leader, said. However, he added that he did not expect the Serbian President to accept the findings. "We expect further escalation, aggravation of this political crisis."

Weeks of processions through Belgrade ended on Thursday when police with body armour, helmets, shields and truncheons cleared the streets, forcing demonstrators back into a pedestrian square. Police also curtailed yesterday's celebrations, preventing students from marching through the streets. Instead the pro-Opposition protesters walked in circles pretending to be prisoners, blew trumpets and whistles and chanted slogans.

Clashes between the two sides on Tuesday left at least 58 people injured and two dead. One man was seriously wounded after he was shot in the head by a government supporter.



Students show identity cards to Belgrade riot police as they defy a ban on marching yesterday

Britons among 28 held on barge

FROM REUTERS IN LAGOS

TWENTY-EIGHT foreigners, including two Britons, ten Filipinos and nine Frenchmen, are being held hostage on a barge offshore in south-eastern Nigeria by 60 Nigerian workers demanding wage increases, a Philippine diplomat said yesterday.

"It is the fifth day today. They have been there since December 23 and there are ongoing negotiations to resolve the situation," Hermes Dorado, consul-general of the Philippine embassy in Lagos, said.

The dispute involves a French oil services company identified as NTPM that employed the workers on its barge, the WB-82, which transports crude oil from onshore fields to tankers.

The other hostages are five Indians, one Lebanese and one Belgian. They have not been named. The Nigerians on the barge did not appear to be armed, Mr Dorado said.

"So far they are safe and unharmed despite the passing yesterday of a deadline by the Nigerian workers who said their demands were not met by then," he said. The vessel was being held about 30 miles offshore from the oil-producing town of Eket.

Mobil Nigeria Unlimited, a joint venture with the US firm Mobil Corp, is the main producer of crude oil in that area, but its staff were unavailable to comment yesterday because of public holidays. Mr Dorado said the Filipino crew sent an urgent message to Manila for help.

Christmas loses its glitter for troops on last post at Chinese border

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN HONG KONG

FOR Corporal Justin Grattan there was very little festivity during this season to be merry. The 24-year-old from Stoke-on-Trent was on duty at the Nam Hang observation post, gazing over the forbidding fence into the border city of Shenzhen in China.

Asked how he had enjoyed Christmas, he responded:

"What Christmas? Christmas did not happen in 1996."

British troops of the First Battalion, Staffordshire Regiment, are deployed along the Chinese border at five observation posts in Hong Kong's New Territories. Their duty is to log what they see, or "patterns of life". But the exercise seems rather pointless given that Hong Kong reverts to Chinese rule at midnight on June 30, 1997.

"We were in Northern Ireland before this... that was exciting," said Corporal Grattan. "But this is boring work, just standing up here for 12 hours at a stretch seeing what they do - and it is the same every time." Seemingly surprised, he added that the Chinese did not celebrate Christmas - it was just another day for them.

On a bridge across the murky Shenzhen River, where once a huge red billboard

declared "Down With the US Imperialists and All Their Running Dogs", a Chinese poster now shows a well-groomed golfer at the Mission Hills golf course. Close by, a digital clock counts out the days until July 1, and a poster in English states: "Hong Kong will be a better place in 1997."

The border, once a tense place, is now more relaxed. "Sometimes the Chinese police or army wave to us from the

other side," Corporal Grattan said. He and his three companions are on a four-day stretch of duty here. "We always wave back - after all, you have to think of public relations."

In his Christmas message to the British garrison, Major-General Bryan Dutton, Commander, British Forces, Hong Kong, said he was saddened at the continuing running down of the garrison. "We now have

to look ahead to the last lap and up the tempo again." There were new challenges, he added, including the arrival of advance parties of China's People's Liberation Army and the final pullout.

The Staffords have a long connection with Hong Kong - their publicity handout recalls how they fought in the 1841-42 Opium War. On this last five-month tour in Hong Kong they are unaccompanied by

their families. When they leave in February, the Black Watch will take over until the handover. They will arrive with a large pipe band to exit the colony in style.

The Staffords' commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Jim Tanner, said: "We are fortunate to be here in this 'show the flag' role. Our mission is to be a fairly visible sign of British sovereignty up to the handover."

MORNING GOSSIP

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The man who would be King of Morocco has forsaken the nightclub life for the burden of state

Hassan's heir prepares to take reins of power

MARRAKESH FILE
by TUNKU
VARADARAJAN



HEIRS to the throne should not necessarily be envied in serious monarchies. The Prince of Wales, when he becomes King one day, will inherit not just the British Crown but also a host of burdensome comparisons with his mother, the Queen.

The wise King of Spain, Juan Carlos, will also have the Prince Felipe with a devilishly difficult act to follow. Both these cases, however, pale into insignificance when compared with the next instalment in the kingdom of Morocco — Mamlaka al-Maghreb, to use its official Arabic name — when Crown Prince Sidi Mohammed should succeed the tireless and titanic King Hassan II.

The Alaouite dynasty has ruled Morocco since the 17th century. Directly descended from the family of the Prophet Muhammad, its rulers boast the purest bloodline in the Islamic world.

The prince, who will be King Mohammed VI when he ascends the throne, will inherit a kingdom quite unlike its counterparts elsewhere in the

world. After 35 years on the throne, his father has constructed a weird and magic monarchy, where a paternalistic absolutism coexists with the kind of independent opposition found in no other Arab kingdom.

Little, however, is known about the prince. When the 67-year-old King Hassan fell seriously ill with a bout of pneumonia in New York last November, the world's press scrambled chaotically to put together a portrait of the Crown Prince, the man who would be King. It is rumoured that his grandfather saved his father's life: so paralysed by panic were the court physicians that only the prince had the presence of mind to send for an ambulance.

Aged 33, Prince Sidi Mo-

ammed has so far led a life shrouded in deliberate mystery. Extraordinarily, it is not even known whether he is married or not. What is certain, however, is that he is better prepared to rule his kingdom than most crown princes will ever be. He has a graduate degree in international relations from a French university — his thesis was on "The Co-operation between the European Union and the Maghreb"; he speaks English and Spanish in addition to the customary Arabic and French; and he has shadowed his father carefully in the corridors of power.

Yet recently he has stepped out of that shadow, travelling abroad on his father's behalf to France, the Middle East, and the United States. On his

visit to the latter, he met both President Clinton and Al Gore, the Vice-President, although he failed to secure an appointment with Madeleine Albright, the new US Secretary of State whose forthright views on the Western Sahara question have never been to the Moroccan Government's taste. Analysts, however, detect a greater role for Prince Sidi Mohammed in the handling of that long-running dispute, and he is believed to have exchanged views, through intermediaries, with leaders of the Polisario Front.

Equally, the prince has adopted a lifestyle more in keeping with his new-found role. He has ceased visiting Rabat's nightclubs, where he was once known to enjoy youthful diversions, and reflects the gravitas of an active crown prince.

His main task now is to win the confidence of his father's courtiers, none of them natural modernisers. If he does so, he will secure a smooth transition — when, at long last, he takes the throne in Morocco.



Prince Sidi Mohammed, on his father's right, at an event in Rabat this year

Kingdom hopes to have world at its feet

IF MOROCCO has its way, the football World Cup will come to the kingdom in 2006.

Booyed by the success of its professionals in the main European leagues, and consistently at the top of African football tables, the country has made a bid for the game's premier competition. France is to host the Cup in 1998, and Japan and South Korea will do so jointly in 2002.

"That means," a spokesman for the Moroccan Football Federation said, "that Africa has to have the Cup in 2006. The continent has never hosted the competition, and we think Morocco offers the best facilities of all."

MOROCCO'S main forest, the Mamora, is in danger of disappearing in less than 50 years, according to environmentalists.

The forest, which consists principally of cork-oaks, lies to the north of the capital Rabat, and has long served as the city's "lungs".

Yet the pressures on the Mamora grow daily, with peasants plundering firewood and clearing the forest for farmland. At present, only 24,700 wooded acres remain, compared with its surface area of more than 148,200 acres 40 years ago.

China and Russia to cut border forces

By RICHARD BEESTON

RUSSIA and China yesterday agreed to reduce the military forces along their common border, as part of a wide range of bilateral agreements to improve ties between the former Communist rivals.

President Yeltsin and Li Peng, the visiting Chinese Prime Minister, agreed to pull back ground troops from one of the most heavily militarised frontiers in the world. Details of the deal were not released and will probably not be until President Jiang Zemin of China visits Moscow in April for a summit with the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the former Soviet republics that also share a border with China.

China's 2,700-mile border with the former Soviet Union became a tense frontier when relations with Moscow broke down in the mid-1950s, leading to bloody clashes between the two sides in the 1960s. The bilateral deals agreed yesterday included the sale of Russian warplanes to China as well as ambitious plans for oil and gas pipelines to China. Apart from economic co-operation, Peking and Moscow are also keen to forge closer political ties.

Lebed launches third political party

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW



Lebed: attacked Yeltsin's fitness for presidency

ALEKSANDR LEBED, Russia's former security chief, launched a new political party yesterday and set the stage for a fresh clash with the Kremlin, after accusing President Yeltsin of being unfit to hold office.

Two months after he was fired by the Russian leader for insubordination as national security adviser, the ambitious former paratrooper said he wanted to give Russians a fresh choice with his new Russian Popular Republican Party.

"The 'third way' will be an alternative to both the Communists and the current democratic elite since both are alien to the people," General Lebed told about 150 delegates representing 72 Russian regions at a two-day gathering

outside Moscow. "A third party will make the bureaucratic elite respect the interests of society and state."

Earlier, in an interview with the *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* newspaper, he said Mr Yeltsin was too sick to fulfil his duties properly and the country had been plunged into crisis by incompetent aides. "I know perfectly well that Boris Nikolaevich [Yeltsin] is a very sick person," said the general. "The President's resignation would be a normal, civilised way out of the situation... [he] must rest himself at his dacha and care for his grandchildren."

The attack, coming only days after the Russian leader formally returned to work after nearly six months' absence, appeared to signal that

General Lebed intends to establish himself as Mr Yeltsin's main opposition challenger.

Certainly the language used by General Lebed suggested that there will not be any reconciliation between the two men, who briefly joined forces to defeat the Communists in last July's elections.

Yesterday General Lebed predicted that the country was heading for a crisis in the spring and he ruled out any talk of a return to Mr Yeltsin's staff, saying: "I will never be a bureaucrat, my spine is not rubbery enough."

The former security chief, who succeeded in resolving the Chechen conflict during his brief tenure in office, said his new party would be a centrist movement that would campaign to amend the constitution and

diminish the authority of the president.

Experts are divided on whether General Lebed has the political stamina to remain a key figure in Russian politics until the next presidential elections in 2000. They are agreed, however, that the formation of an effective national grassroots political movement is vital if the headstrong former boxer, who is regarded as the most popular politician in Russia today, hopes to gain real political power.

In the last presidential race he came third behind Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist Party candidate who has the only well-organised political party in the country, and Mr Yeltsin, who had unlimited funding for campaigning and advertising.

France pulls out of new air patrols over northern Iraq

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

FRANCE yesterday withdrew from the air reconnaissance operation aimed at safeguarding the Kurds in northern Iraq, in a move likely to anger the United States but please President Saddam Hussein.

The French Foreign Ministry said it would not participate in the new, slimmed-down version of "Operation Provide Comfort", which comes into force next week, because the aims of the mission had changed.

Paris said the operation, established after the Gulf War five years ago, had ceased to be "humanitarian" since Saddam had agreed with the United Nations that 30 per cent of all aid for Iraq should be earmarked for Kurdish areas.

The new operation is essentially one of air surveillance, said Anita Limido, the Foreign Ministry spokeswoman who announced the end of French involvement. However, France's partners will suspect Paris of trying to court Saddam for a share of his oil revenue.

Washington has urged President Chirac to continue to support the United States, Britain and Turkey in their attempts to stop Iraqi planes flying over Kurdish areas in

the north. The French move follows a spate of recent disputes between France and the United States that began when Paris objected to Kofi Annan's nomination as UN Secretary-General. Relations deteriorated further when M Chirac asked America to abandon its command of Nato forces in southern Europe.

The *al-Thawra* newspaper, an organ of the ruling Baath party in Iraq, said: "The French move will enhance ties with Iraq by boosting comprehensive relations that both sides are willing to bring back to their past level."

French harbour fond memories of Mitterrand

By ADAM SAGE

THE burning ambition of François Mitterrand to be remembered as one of France's greatest Presidents has achieved some success.

Nearly a year after his death on January 8, he is rated as a popular and effective head of state who did much during his 14 years in office to improve France's standing in the world, according to an opinion poll published today.

The poll, for the weekly *Figaro* magazine, shows Mitterrand's compa-

triot has largely forgiven or forgotten his failures and foibles. The poll bears no grudge over his sympathies for the collaborationist Vichy regime or his extramarital affairs. The findings are also tolerant of his domestic policies, which economists say are to blame for the present difficulties. By lowering the retirement age, shortening the working week and extending social security, he left France uncompetitive and facing high taxes.

Although an overwhelming majority condemn his action to combat unemployment, 57 per cent approve of

his costly welfare reforms — a finding that underlines the dilemma the present Gaullist administration faces as it tries to rein in public spending. The most unexpected answer came in response to the question — "How do you remember the Mitterrand years (1981 to 1995)?" Then the French would have, with typical Gallic pessimism, pointed to the sleaze that dominated his second seven-year term. Now, 65 per cent have good memories of this era, with just 35 per cent discontented. This prompts *Le Figaro* to say that "he is greater dead than alive".

Three-quarters of the respondents see Mitterrand's attempt to forge European union as the most significant aspect of his term in office. Surprisingly, the French are also tolerant of his domestic policies, which economists say are to blame for the present difficulties. By lowering the retirement age, shortening the working week and extending social security, he left France uncompetitive and facing high taxes.

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■ 1996

... was the year in which Sir Richard Rogers unveiled his Millennium Dome for Greenwich



■ 1996

... and the year in which Sir Simon Rattle announced that he was leaving Birmingham

THE TIMES ARTS



■ 1996

... was notable for rows about the corrupting effect of tacky films like *Showgirls*



■ 1996

... but also an *annus mirabilis* for that one-man musicals industry, Andrew Lloyd Webber



The most exuberant musical event of 1996: in November some 2,845 schoolchildren, plus instruments, gathered for a morning in Birmingham under the charismatic direction of Sir Simon Rattle to form the world's largest orchestra

Cheers, tears, and a lot of hot air

If the arts are supposed to stimulate debate, 1996 was a vintage year. We argued about everything, from medieval caskets to pop musicals. Sometimes the arguments were more fun than the art we were arguing about. Sometimes the art never actually happened, but we had the arguments anyway.

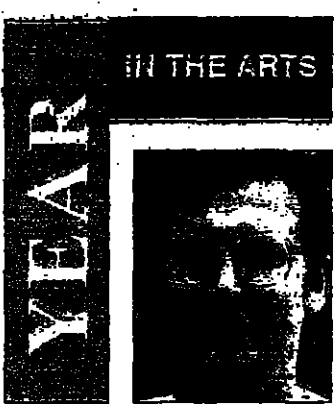
Mostly, the arguments weren't over money — which is fairly amazing for Britain. They were over that dreaded word, *taste*. Whose taste should prevail when the outcome affects us all? That question certainly lay behind the big arguments about the future look of London.

Sir Norman Foster's cross plan for a 94-storey office block that would loom over St Paul's Cathedral like a mugger over an old granny was widely abhorred. So was Daniel Libeskind's accident with a Rubik cube, otherwise known as his design for the V&A's Boilerhouse. And a rum lot of designs for a vista-blotting "inhabited bridge" over the Thames found little favour with anyone except card-carrying modernists.

The jury is still out on Sir Richard Rogers's gargantuan Millennium Dome proposal for Greenwich. But that is not the main thing holding back the planned millennium jollies. There are worries about the rocketing budget, implausible deadlines, unknown exhibition content, leaderless management, inadequate private finance and uncertain political backing. Apart from that, it's all going well.

We argued a lot in 1996 about our palaces of culture. The British Museum responded to criticism by threatening admission charges. The Royal Academy was revealed to have a £3 million deficit and some impressionistic accounting procedures, at least in the past. The Royal Opera House, in an unwise burst of glasnost, let BBC cameras roam freely: the candid footage added greatly to the nation's gaiety but did little to muster support for its accident-prone redevelopment scheme. Still, at least Covent Garden hasn't been torched by the Mafia, as is now believed to have happened to Venice's La Fenice opera house.

The sale of great works of art also proved to be a fertile source of dispute, particularly if it involved a transfer across national boundaries. A vigorous campaign, led by this newspaper, kept the Thomas & Becket casket in Britain. But the director of the Getty Museum in California, still smarting at having Canova's *Three Graces* snatched from his grasp, accused the British Government of "bending" its own export licence rules, and



Richard Morrison
recalls 1996
as a year
in which
some of the
backstage

arguments in the arts world were rather more entertaining than the shows themselves

if foreign buyers couldn't be guaranteed a fair deal. With the Greeks again agitating for the return of the Elgin Marbles, and demands in Europe for the repatriation of works of art that were looted during the Second World War, the question of how far a country can lay claim to its "national heritage" looks set to keep armies of lawyers, diplomats and art experts very profitably employed for decades.

After taking only a couple of years to think about it, the Arts Council set up several schemes to pour lottery money into creative arts programmes rather than building projects. One scheme, *Arts for Everyone*, removed all quality controls from little groups applying for small grants. Amateurs have never had so much money thrust upon

them; we shall expect dazzling costumes from the local operatic society next year.

Perhaps the Arts Council's new concern about "the grassroots" was a sign of guilt. A report revealed that 700 times more arts lottery money had been spent, per head, on Londoners than on the people of Bedfordshire.

What else did we argue about? Pornography and violence, naturally. The Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition at the Hayward Gallery produced less hot air than his homoerotic snaps had done in America. But a series of tacky films — *Kids*, *Showgirls*, *Strange Days* and *Crash* — were given much more publicity than their quality merited. When will politicians learn that the quickest way to quadruple a bad film's audi-

ence is to call for it to be banned?

Some lively disagreements in 1996 were unspoken: the critics would damn a show; the public would respond by queuing round the block to see it. Thus does Cliff Richard's *Heathcliff* continue its triumphant progress round Britain. Nowhere was this dichotomy more apparent than in the film world. The more the critics raved about *Breaking the Waves*, Lars Von Trier's intense study of marriage difficulties in the Outer Hebrides, the more the public flocked to see *Independence Day* and *Twister*. Funny, that.

Still, the critics did exert some influence. Sir Cameron Mackintosh closed the much-panned musical *Martin Guerre* after a few months, had it rewritten, and relaunched it in a better version. It takes courage to do that after you have spent six years and £3.5 million on a show.

And while we are handing out awards for boldness, let's salute Professor George Steiner. He ended his keynote speech at the 50th Edinburgh Festival with the suggestion that the festival abolish itself. "To know when to stop is a rare but vivid mark of honesty within excellence," said the prof, to muted applause.

Doubtless Sir Simon Rattle would agree with him, though his decision to quit the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra will leave a huge hole in Brum's cultural life. Rattle's charisma was nowhere better displayed this year than when he presided over the "world's biggest orchestra": 2,845 children gathered in Symphony Hall for the most exuberant (if not the most polished) performance of the year.

But it was Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's *annus mirabilis*. Cats became the longest-running musical ever on Broadway or in the West End. *Jesus Christ Superstar* was revived at the garishly refurbished Lyceum. By *Jeeves*, a flop 21 years ago, was revised, restaged, and instantly reborn as yet another Lloyd Webber hit. *Joseph*, plus dreamboat, returned. *Whistle Down the Wind* — Lloyd Webber's version of an ancient Hayley Mills movie — opened in America to warm reviews. And then came the film of *Evita*.

The only irritating cloud on the great man's horizon was a plagiarism case in America. And Lloyd Webber even ended this in profit, winning precisely \$78.09 in damages by counter-suing a songwriter who had sued him. Every little bit helps.

So was it a good year for British culture? On the whole, yes. The critics about falling

ever, particularly from theatre folk. Yet Sir Peter Hall, inaugurating his "last big project before I hang up my clogs", announced six new plays and much else for the revitalised Old Vic. The reconstructed Globe mounted a promising "prologue" season. Cambridge's Arts Theatre and Oxford's Playhouse reopened after sumptuous refurbishments. A £42 million concert hall opened in Manchester. And Cardiff announced that its new opera-house project was not, after all, dead — merely disguised as the

Wales Millennium Centre". One of the world's finest conductors, Christoph von Dohnányi, has been lured to the helm of the Philharmonia Orchestra. A witty, all-male version of *Swan Lake* is running commercially in the West End. The Prime Minister has

proclaimed London "the coolest city on the planet". And the publisher Macmillan feels optimistic enough about our supposedly philistine age to bring out a 34-volume *Dictionary of Art*. There is hope for serious culture. Or at least room for argument.

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Sean French reflects on the pressures, pitfalls, and the pittance of a reward he got, after collaborating on a novel with his wife

Rich writers are pure fiction

An old Greek said that you should call no man happy until he is dead, which is a bit late to be of much use to the man in question. I can supply a more serviceable observation. You cannot truly say you love, or even like, someone until you have either (a) shared a house with them, (b) gone on holiday together, or (c) collaborated on writing fiction. X may be beautiful or witty, but what will you think of them when they finish the milk or never do the washing up?

Or, to be frankly autobiographical, how will you react when you hand a chapter of your novel over to your wife and, as she reads it, you hear the clatter of her keyboard, and the occasional mutter of "she wouldn't do that" or "that doesn't make sense"?

After W.H. Auden had briefly and disastrously collaborated with Bertolt Brecht on a version of *The*

Duchess Of Malfi, he concluded that Brecht was the only person he had ever met who justified the existence of capital punishment. When my wife, Nicci Gerrard, and I collaborated on writing *The Memory Game*, we had some cross words, long silks and tortuous remonstrations, but we never quite got to that stage.

From the start, we agreed about the sort of book we wanted to write. Victoria Wood has a joke about how, when she finds herself in W.H. Smith, she can resist picking up Margaret Drabble novels and looking at the last chapter to see what doesn't happen. Whatever else we thought we could achieve, we

wanted to provide the sort of reader satisfaction and excitement that we ourselves craved.

The story would have a murder in it, and it would end with the solution, with twists and misdirections along the way. We found a theme that intrigued us: the recovery of hidden memories. In the United States it has broken up hundreds of families and sent many people to prison convicted of crimes alleged to have been committed years, or even decades, earlier.

We constructed a detailed chapter-by-chapter plot and began to write separately (our one attempt to write together resulted in precisely

one sentence and a prolonged row). The peculiarity of the collaborative process is that we surprised ourselves from then on.

As well as creating a crime story, we found ourselves writing a story about our shared obsessions: about the idea of family with its enticements and betrayals; about memory and the way we interpret the past in order to justify ourselves.

If there is a single reason that this novel has been published under a joint name, it is that when *The Memory Game* was finished, we were almost alarmed by its difference from what either of us could have produced on our own.

When Rob Lowe, the ex-teen

movie star, once notoriously videoed himself having sex with two young girls, and the videotape was stolen and widely copied, the comedian Arsenio Hall commented: "At last, Rob Lowe has made a film that everybody wants to see."

I know how Lowe must have felt. In a way we went through a similar, if more welcome, surprise. For more than a year, *The Memory Game* was our secret. We were protective of it until it was completely finished. Then we tentatively started to ask other people to take a look. They weren't just enthusiastic about it, they saw it as a product, something that could make money.

Let me put this in perspective. I've published various books, both fiction and non-fiction. This has been satisfying in various degrees, but my earnings from them were, at best, comparable to those of the man who washes the windows of your house and, at worst, comparable to those of the man who washes the windscreen of your car when you stop at traffic lights.

To put it further into perspective, for the two-book contract Nicci and I signed with Heinemann, we were paid proportionately much less than the £1 million Martin Amis has just been paid for four books, let alone the £500,000 he was reportedly paid for *The Information*. But our advance was nice all

the same: about the amount that Amis would have got if he had been paid according to what *The Information* sold.

Yesterday a journalist asked whether, as somebody who had published well-reviewed literary novels, it wasn't a problem to be regarded as somebody who had written a popular book which was considered to be a commodity, to be used as part of a large marketing campaign, to be compared with writers such as Jeffrey Archer and John Grisham.

It was an interesting question and required an equally scrupulous answer. I thought hard and then replied with all the intelligence and sincerity I could muster: No, it wasn't.

The Memory Game is published by Heinemann at £2.99

Waiting on the outside world

Rachel Campbell-Johnston assesses hopes for peace in Latin America

The Guatemalan Ambassador to Peru, José María Argüeta, is the latest high-profile hostage to be released from the besieged embassy in Lima. It is a gesture that provides an important recognition of the peace process currently being completed in Guatemala. Today, in the National Palace in Guatemala City, President Alvaro Arzú signs the final document of an accord that marks the official conclusion of a 36-year civil war with leftist guerrillas. For Tupac Amaru rebels, in search not simply of the release of prisoners but also of an eventual role for their movement in Peruvian politics, Guatemala provides a possible template for the way ahead.

Like Peru, Guatemala is a nation that has scarcely known tranquillity since Spain's conquistadors colonised it about 500 years ago. The division between the descendants of the Spaniards and the Indians has never been blurred. For centuries, the indigenous people have been despised — and killed. Guatemala may be sold to tourists as "the land of eternal spring", but its verdant hills and dramatic volcanoes have enfolded scenes of poverty and massacre. A succession of military dictatorships has crushed any semblance of democracy.

An attempted coup by leftist Army officers in 1960 was savagely repressed. A rebel movement, made up mainly of Mayan Indians, was born. Guatemala found itself plunged into one of the bloodiest civil conflicts in all Central America. Over the past 36 years, more than 100,000 people have been killed, and as many driven into exile. It is this which President Arzú now puts to an end with the signing of a ceasefire and agreements providing for constitutional reforms, demilitarisation and rights for indigenous people. It is apt that left-wing Peruvian rebels should recognise the political importance of Guatemala's model.

Yet Guatemala's path into the future will not be easy. Its people have watched a peace process stumbling along for too long, and broken too often, to believe in President Arzú's signature can change a nation so long pinched between an entrenched elite and the savagery of a lawless army. Many believe that the signing of these accords is simply a show of hands, the price Guatemalans must pay for foreign aid.

The cessation of armed conflict provides no simple solution. It has been many years since the guerrilla movement was a viable military force. Crushed by a US-backed Government, its numbers have fallen below 1,000. What Guatemala

la hopes to gain is the sense of security that breeds lasting democracy and lays the ground for more equitable economic organisation. The balance needs to be redressed in a land in which the majority survive on maize tortillas cooked on wood stoves, while the rich fly private planes to Miami to do their weekend shopping. A withered judiciary and frail Civil Service need to be rebuilt from scratch.

The dismantling of a headstrong paramilitary state is crucial in a country where the army's power has too long gone unquestioned. But the reintroduction into society of youngsters nurtured in a climate of civil war will not be easy.

Already, the country is lapsing into undisciplined violence. If the volcanoes that ring Guatemala City appear beautiful, veiled with bright flowers at the end of the rains, to walk their steep paths is to risk robbery and rape. When I visited the city, my host seemed surprised I had made it to his flat unharmed.

Land reform, too, will prove difficult. Though former guerrilla movements may argue that private property should be redistributed, the Government relies on landowners for political support. The seizure of territories to which indigenous peoples may claim some historical right could spawn a conflict more vicious than the guerrilla fighting and proposals to approve an amnesty for those who committed atrocities during the civil war, threaten attempts at reconciliation. There is anguished protest from human-rights groups and relatives of victims who want a truth commission similar to South Africa's to bring to justice those accountable for killings, kidnappings and torture.

A way forward has been sketched for Guatemala, but no clear map has been drawn. Agreements have, many say, been thrown together too quickly. As a Quiché Indian chewing tobacco in Chimaltenango put it, "Beans take a long time to stew. If you cook them too quickly, the insides remain raw. Everyone gets indigestion. But maybe that's better than hunger."

Guatemala's real struggle is only just starting. The country has a potentially prosperous economy. Its people are dynamic and entrepreneurial. Already, small farmers have proved themselves inventive, diversifying to capture non-traditional markets for snow peas, sesame or shrimps. President Arzú shows signs of heading a clear-headed and decisive government. To win the war, he will need all the help the outside world can afford.

To the glory of God and art

Treasures which lie undisturbed in English country churches are equal to those of Tuscany

Most churches have light and dark moods. Last week I watched the one turn to the other as a December evening closed in on Highnam Church outside Cheltenham. For a moment the late sun blazed through its Victorian glass, throwing shards of colour on to darkening walls. Trees swaying in the wind outside broke the sun's beams and drove the colour furiously back and forth across the nave. Soon all was black.

Then we turned on the lights and a quite different church sprang to life, a theatre of Gothic revival created by the Victorian aesthete Gambia Parry and dedicated to the Holy Innocents as memorial to his wife and children, dead of tuberculosis.

He filled it with frescoes, screens, statues, paintings and carved wood, ordering that the enormous cost be kept secret from him by his architect, Henry Woodier, and his bank manager (not a practice recommended today). On the night of its consecration in 1851, Parry entertained 700 guests at Highnam Court. As they ate he slipped away alone into the night to place a bust of his wife in the church.

The spire still rises over Parry's landscape, waited on by a grizzled guard of oak, yew and monkey puzzle, the old school, lodge and personage all extant. Two years ago Parry's great-grandson, Tom Fenton, restored his ancestor's masterpiece as one of few wholly unaltered works of the period. Highnam is a glory of the Severn valley. I doubt if one reader in a thousand has ever heard of it.

This month my search for England's best thousand churches (other than cathedrals) completed Gloucestershire. The county may not quite match Somerset or Norfolk, but what it lacks in depth it makes up in variety and surprise. The county is really two, if not three, regions. The "Chilantshire" plateau of the Cotswolds from Bath up to Chipping Campden has a wild and regal air, of great manors and an appropriate aristocracy of churches. At Cirencester and Chipping Campden, Fairford and Northleach, the grandees of English Perpendicular tower over the undulating uplands. In the late 15th century, while the Roses made war, the Cotswolds made money, much of it spent on churches. Legend claims that a dozen Campden men became Lord Mayors of London.

The wool boom gave us the medieval glass of Fairford, the Grevel brasses at Campden, the "teardrop" tracery at Lechlade and the unsurpassed porches at



Tewkesbury Abbey, with reputedly the largest Norman tower in Europe. Inside, the columns of the nave rise like trees in an enchanted forest

Cirencester and Northleach. Porches are to Gloucestershire what towers are to Somerset. From the three-storey structure overlooking Cirencester market, wool merchant guilds conducted business and charity from what must be England's first office block. Northleach's wool was famous from the leas of Steyne to the weaving houses of Flanders. Its superb porch, equalled only by that of St Mary Redcliffe in Bristol, was the Rialto of the Cotswolds.

Up on the hills the churches are all Perpendicular light, tall conservatories of silver stone and ribbed glass. Beyond and below lies the Severn Vale from Tewkesbury down to Berkeley. It is almost a different county. Beyond, the Forest of Dean might be a different country. Britain's Andorra lost between England and Wales. The Forest should mint its own stamps.

Here the churches are still dark shrines, founded by Saxon missionaries, rebuilt by the Normans and not much altered since. This architecture is older and more varied. It is dominated (Gloucestershire apart) by the mighty keep of Tewkesbury, with reputedly the largest Norman tower in Europe. Inside, the round columns of the nave rise like tree-trunks in an enchanted forest to a floral canopy of liernes and coloured bosses. Tewkesbury's Gothic tombs are thickets of Perpendicular ornament, once stained with the blood of Yorkists and Lancastrians. They butchered each other even in the abbey nave, where the monks stripped the bodies of armour and used it to cover the vestry door.

Around Tewkesbury lie humble Norman ministers and chapels, at Deerhurst, Hailes, Bishops Cleeve

and, over the Worcestershire border, Ripple and Bredon. Deerhurst is so isolated on the bank of the Severn that we could imagine the early Benedictines rowing upriver with their Saxon masons to plunder Roman villas for stone and tiles.

They fixed angels and madonnas with Byzantine faces high on the facades of their churches. Across at Kempeley they fixed frescoes in the damp plaster in the Italian manner. Here is a Romanesque chancel with a complete set of 12th-century murals — some of the oldest in

Simon Jenkins

Britain until last week's discovery of 11th-century work in Norfolk. Located in Tuscany, such a church would enjoy a permanent jam of expatriate Volvos. In Gloucestershire it sits lost in the hills between the Malverns and the Wye, a masterpiece in a field, undisturbed by fame.

Beyond Kempeley and deep in the Forest of Dean is Newland church, the "cathedral of the Forest". Its tower rises over the surrounding trees while its nave shelters the spirits of the woods. They take the form of a stone knight: a "Forester of Fee" named Wyrrall, his hair in plaits, his hunting horn and knife at his side, a Bowman in his hat and raiment of all a memorial brass of a medieval coalminer, complete

with pick, and a candle in his teeth. These are more than just religious treasures, they are the relics of a living community.

Some of Gloucestershire's most appealing churches are tucked into the lee of the Cotswold escarpment. They were not the ostentatious chantries of wool magnates but congregations of yeoman farmers. At Stanton and Buckland the naves were furnished as their patrons, cozy rooms of dark wood and wainscoting, with space for hats, sticks, dogs and children and perhaps a bottle of port under the seat.

Above on the slopes lie hidden the chapels of the shepherds and drovers on whose backs the "wool-sack" of England rested. The beautifully incised Norman vault at Elskstone conceals a chancel roof that doubled as the priest's dovecot. At Dunstbourne Rouse, the west front butts into the hillside while the east raises itself over a secret crypt. I once found a sheep inside and expected drovers to stomp into the nave, gusts of leaves sweeping after them and coating the pews with autumn.

For three centuries after the Reformation the churches of Gloucestershire rested on their laurels. Victorian revivalism was merciful, sparing them the fate visited on much of Yorkshire. At Selsey, G.F. Bodley commissioned William Morris and his friends to design a set of Pre-Raphaelite windows. The result is to find on the slopes outside Stroud a gallery of Burne-Jones, Madox Brown, Webb and Rossetti. At Daylesford, J.L. Pearson built a French Gothic casquet for Harman Grisewood and

for the tomb of Warren Hastings. In gloomy weather it is as gorgeously sinister as a Hollywood mortuary.

A medieval museum the size of Cluny's in Paris could be filled with the treasures of Gloucestershire churches. It would take the Romanesque capitals at Leonard Stanley, of Adam and Eve and of Mary giving birth to Jesus. It would take the jesting gargoyles at Winchcombe, leering down at the townspeople below. It would take the alabaster tombs in Berkeley Church, hands and faces so pure they glow in torchlight. It would take the Sabbatarian mural in Ampney St Mary's, a ghoulish warning to villagers that Christ's wounds will spout blood if they dare to use their worktools on a Sunday. Yet no museum should ever be filled in this way. Gloucestershire's collection is where it should be, dispersed among the people whose craftsmanship and devotion brought it to life.

In this county of contrast, my most vivid impression has been not of one church but of two. Opposite the north facade of Tewkesbury Abbey runs a medieval alley with a row of Georgian windows. Inside is one of England's earliest Baptist chapels, dating from the 1650s. Its fittings are simple, with pulpit and baptistry in the centre, and with a small chamber upstairs with a fireplace for the minister.

In a hundred yards we pass from one of England's mightiest churches to one of its humblest. Here is architecture singing in every register, here in glorious Gloucestershire.

In the soup

WITHIN the past 18 months, he has married off three daughters with aplomb: one to Crown Prince Pavlos of Greece; another to an heir of the Getty fortunes; and a third to the European aristocrat Alex von Fursenberg. But Robert Miller, the Hong Kong-based duty free tycoon, is still paying his dues.

The man who wheeled his way into Britain's Barboured set with the recent purchase of Earl Peel's Yorkshire grouse moor for £9



Alexandra: change of mind

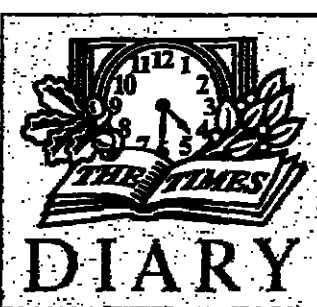
million is being sued on account of the New York reception party which followed the wedding of his daughter Alexandra to Von Fursenberg.

Premier Party Servers, a company which provides staff, is suing for £250,000 because 200 of its waiters were cancelled just a week before the party. A woman's pre-emptive it may be to change her mind, but the company takes a less romantic view. "In eight years of business, I've never had anybody pull out so late," said Marc Levine, the company's owner. "I'm sure they want to do the right thing."

The build-up was fraught. Just days before the wedding, Alexandra, 21, went off the caterer Glorious Food and turned to Harry Cipriani, a restaurant favoured by her parents. Within days, she had changed her mind again — forcing Cipriani to cancel Levine's 200 waiters and inviting a law suit. Wedding guests have been subpoenaed.

Hummbug

THIS Christmas in The Netherlands a wife became so enraged



with her husband's carol singing that she grabbed a knife and plunged it into his chest. The 55-year-old, who was due to appear in court yesterday, told police that she tolerated her spouse singing *Silent Night* for several hours before her patience snapped on Boxing Day. The husband is recovering in hospital, humming quietly to himself.

Clubbed

SHEER bafflement is the mood at the Royal St George's golf club in Sandwich, Kent, occasional home of the British Open and the place where Ian Fleming, once club captain, imagined James Bond playing against Goldfinger. The club secretary has issued members with an extraordinary letter announcing an increase in subscription fees. It is in language comprehensible only to

the steeliest of MBA-trained minds. Section three is a cracker: "The subscription for those members who were previously in either the over 120 miles category (40 per cent of basic subscription) or the overseas category (25 per cent of basic subscription) and who will now be in the 121-300 mile category (60 per cent of basic subscription) will be based on 50 per cent of the basic subscription in 1997 (£350) and 60 per cent of the basic subscription in 1998."

"They must be taking the mick," said one senior member. "Or they think we are so stupid we will just pay up regardless. But we've got some of our top men on this. Once they have worked it out, there'll be hell to pay."

Time bomb

IN A MODEST house in Halifax on Christmas Day, guests had to make do with chicken tikka pizzas after the 22lb turkey blew up in the oven. Chris Lee, a hypnotist by profession, was opening presents next door when he heard the blast from the kitchen.

"I walked into the room and it was just a scene of devastation," he explained. "Bits of turkey were all over the walls, ceiling and floor. The oven door was hanging off, things had been blown off the walls



Isabella Rossellini: true story

and there were broken pans, plates and cups everywhere."

Mr Lee had been too assiduous in stuffing the bird. When he crammed in the sage and onion, he didn't notice his watch slip off into the turkey's midriff. In the heat of the oven, it's battery exploded and Christmas dinner went with it — to the glee of his Labrador Zoe. "She had a whale of a time licking up all the pieces."

Isabella Rossellini, so rudely dismissed from her lucrative contract with the make-up and perfume company Lancôme for being too old, has a chance to get her own

back. The daughter of Ingrid Bergman and Roberto Rossellini, she is to write her autobiography which is due in 1997 for the American publishing house Knopf. A perfect opportunity to lay into those less-than-gallant purveyors of face paint.

Bar none

WHEREVER John Prescott is on New Year's Eve, you can guarantee he'll be enjoying himself. His party hat was firmly on at the Christmas bash of *The New Statesman*, where he combined a love of champagne with an unchanged drinking style that owes nothing to the mineral-water-slipping tendency of new Labour.

The magazine's boffiny editor, Ian Hargreaves, approached Prescott late on in the proceedings. He opened his mouth to speak at the very moment that Prescott's assistant, who had been dispatched to the bar to replenish the boss's glass, returned to his side. The glass was empty. Time had been called at 9 o'clock on the button, and the bar was being dismantled. "Right, let's find somewhere else where we can find some more of this stuff," granted Prescott who marched into the night and left Hargreaves gawping like a goldfish.



"I picked it up in the sales"

While the hubbub in the Labour Party surrounds the appointment of press aide Alastair Campbell's partner Fiona Millar to look after Cherie Blair in the run up to the general election, it appears that Norma Major is not to be chaperoned by a spin doctor. Eileen Wise, head of news at Central Office, who trailed in Norma's footsteps during her book tour, has been switched to work as campaign sidekick to Charles Lewington, director of communications.

P.H.S



MANIFESTO PROMISES

Ideas alone are not enough, leadership is required

Writing by instalments helped Charles Dickens to immense popularity, whether it can do the same for the Prime Minister is less certain. John Major's plan to float sections of his manifesto over the coming weeks has a certain daring to recommend it. The plan suggests a confidence in the capacity of ideas to secure the loyalty of voters who might be inclining towards the Conservatives for economic reasons. Ideas, alone, however, are not enough. The electorate will require of the Conservatives not just a tantalising prospectus of fibits for a fifth term but a sense of purpose, and vision — in short, leadership.

The reservoir of regard for Mr Major is deeper than it seems when viewed from Westminster. Admiration for his personal qualities was reflected in the imperfect, but symbolic, *Today* programme Personality of the Year poll. But Mr Major's administration has often lacked the authority, the capacity to shape events and dictate to circumstance, which is the mark of leadership.

The publication of a series of new policies as winter turns to spring provides a late, perhaps last, opportunity to take the initiative. The hints so far do not, however, suggest a Government with the radicalism to enthuse jaded voters nor the certainty on Europe required to dramatise momentous issues of sovereignty. The possibility of privatising child adoption is a welcome deregulatory measure but, compared to the other social reforms which any Government must contemplate, it is thin gruel. The plan to issue vouchers to every citizen to equip them with information technology training is almost Wilsonian in its techno-gimmickry. A party serious about skills should be contemplating the introduction of a fully voucher-based education system.

In the absence of dramatic new thinking

on policy, a robust assertion of core principles becomes all the more important. The case the Conservatives are developing on constitutional reform could be powerful. Lord Cranborne, the Leader of the House of Lords, has argued persuasively that the pace of economic change required to remain competitive is such that broad constitutional stability is all the more important. The Tories have, however, been handicapped communicating their message.

The Government has lacked a single figure who speaks with authority on the constitution in the language of the saloon bar. Too many cooks have been stirring the scotch broth. The Tories would do well to have a single spokesman to speak on constitutional affairs across the United Kingdom, such as the increasingly impressive Welsh Secretary, William Hague.

The second weakness is the inability to oppose threats to the constitution which come from Europe with the same certainty which is directed against domestic opponents. The Government has deliberately maintained a position of studied ambiguity on the single currency to strengthen its negotiating hand but diplomacy's gain has been Dr Mawhinney's loss.

A host of Conservative candidates will make their personal opposition to a single currency embarrassingly clear in their election addresses. They calculate that it is the only straightforward sceptical signal they can send the voters. Some Tory strategists believe the damage done by dissent on such a scale might be limited by suggesting any Commons vote on a single currency would be a free vote. Unfortunately, such a strategy is more likely to smack of expediency than firm Government and without firmness the Tories will find it all the more difficult, in a few short months, to remain in Government.

RECONNAISSANCE MAN

Five hundred years ago: Italian navigator, English sponsor

Echoing the celebrations which marked the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's voyage across the Atlantic, Italy will next year remember another explorer, John Cabot. He may even be recalled as John Caboto, for little is certain about his life, including the spelling of his name. It would be absurd for modern nation states to be quarrelsome possessive about 15th-century explorers who were quite indifferent to nationality and to passports. But before the ceremonies commence, may we shed a small shaft of light on Cabot's non-Italian career?

That is, of course, most of his known life. That such an explorer was born in Genoa and held Venetian citizenship was hardly a coincidence. The two north Italian ports were, in the language of the 20th century, the hubs of Mediterranean transport infrastructure. Venetian and Genoese merchants, fixers and adventurers travelled the length and breadth of the known world, weaving elaborate networks between Alexandria, Catalonia, Constantinople and London. Venice and Genoa were to their time what the Federal Express headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee, or the container terminal at Rotterdam are to our age.

From this busy junction came the men of what one historian calls the Age of Reconnaissance. They were hard-headed, practical navigators whose principal interest in extending the boundaries of the known world lay not in expanding human knowledge but in acquiring land and valuables. Cabot worked for a Venetian merchant and then moved to London, perhaps because he thought it the best base from which to seek a sponsor. He had perhaps already, and independently of Columbus, reckoned that a long voyage east might reveal unknown land. He moved to Bristol and had perhaps

heard tales of voyages to "Vinland", probably Newfoundland, by Viking sailors. In the 1490s, two or three ships each year were reported to have left Bristol for the western Atlantic; they may have fished the Grand Banks or even have reached the mainland.

Cabot thought that he was looking for Asia: the conventional wisdom of the day held that the earth was smaller than it turned out to be and that a new trade route to China could be opened by sailing west. The reconnaissance man went in search of sponsors like today's trekkers who want to cross the Sahara or the Arctic; Cabot had probably made presentations of his budding plans in Lisbon and Seville as well as London. Goaded by news of Columbus's landfall in the Caribbean, England's Henry VII granted letters patent to Cabot and his sons in 1496; they were required to return their goods to Bristol but could have a monopoly of any trade they found.

Cabot may have lacked finesse as a manager. The first voyage failed for lack of food and because of disputes with his crew. He set out again and on the morning of June 24, 1497, the "Matthew" made landfall. Like so much else, the exact spot remains disputed: it could possibly have been Cape Breton Island, perhaps Labrador, but it was probably Newfoundland. A Genoese mariner, with an 18-strong west country crew had found the oldest of what later became the British Dominions. One historian thought that this moment five centuries ago was the first moment at which could be discerned "the outline of England's future role in the world as a country exercising a predominant influence in the British Isles, closely knit to the Continent of Europe, but also impelled by the spirit of commercial and maritime adventure to vast enterprises beyond the ocean."

SUN KINGDOM

We are not undermined

The Grimaldi dynasty may be among the oldest royal families in Europe but Monaco's first family also stars in glamorous modern soap opera. Their present worries include abdication rumours, divorce, paparazzi and a princess who suddenly went bald. The one thing that the ruling family of Monaco do not have to worry about is the legitimacy of their rule. Allegations about the human frailties of the late Princess Grace have not dimmed the lady's fairy-tale allure for her subjects. A daisy chain of scandals and disasters involving unsuitable boyfriends, illegitimate children and failed careers do not seem to have dented local loyalty to the Princess's daughters, Caroline and Stephanie.

Conventional opinion tut tuts at the damage which Prince Rainier's children are supposed to be inflicting on the House of Grimaldi. But the monarchs of Monaco represent the last, pure essence of royalty. Unfettered, boundary-free public behaviour is impossible even for members of royal families elsewhere in the democratic world. In the era when the Grimaldis first seized the lordship of Monaco 700 years ago next year, kings and princes sought no one's opinion or approval of their personal behaviour. The idea that monarchs must obey earthly rules is more modern than monarchy itself.

The Grimaldis are now conducting a

unique constitutional experiment to see whether a completely uninhibited monarchy, not required to be in any way wise or useful, can survive on the brink of the 21st century. This bold empirical research alone is a reason to celebrate seven centuries of survival as the crowned heads of what Somerset Maugham called "a sunny place for shady people."

One can hope, for other reasons, that the Grimaldis will mark more anniversaries. An entire sector of the global magazine publishing business is kept alive — and countless jobs for photographers, caption writers, and designers created — by the knowledge that there will always be some royal misbehaving in Monaco. For the French republican state next door, Monaco fulfils an important psychological function as a virtual monarchy: supplying non-stop regal entertainment unavailable in Paris at no cost to the French taxpayers. Serious crime is hardly known, in spite of a recent influx of Russian businessmen of mysterious antecedents and unexplained assets. The nearby mafia-ridden city of Nice should be so lucky. With a population smaller than Leamington Spa, a territory which would fit inside Central Park and flowerbed frontiers, Monaco could easily merge into France. But its tax-free citizens prefer to keep their hereditary rulers. Aristocracy's allure does not depend on seemingly conduct.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Effectiveness of a single currency

From Professor Sir Graham Hills

Sir, One does not need to be much of an economist to observe that most of our commercial activities are rapidly being globalised. The word markets now implies world markets. Standards imply global standards.

The necessary procedures to play a significant role in these developments include collaboration, partnerships and joint ownership. Economic independence seems an unwise stance, indeed a lost cause, soon to give way to interdependence and greater economic security for us all. That way lies peace, equity and the global rule of law.

In these circumstances it is difficult to see a future for national currencies and other local units of measurement.

These can at best lead to confusion and at worst to gerrymandering which, in the case of money (pace Miss Adrienne May's letter, December 21), has steadily devalued the pound sterling and my earnest efforts to earn a living.

Could we therefore, without more ado, get on with rejoining the EMU and adopting the commonest currency so far.

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM HILLS,
Sunnyside of Threepenny,
Leigh Threepenny, Beith, Ayrshire.
December 23.

From Mr John Evett

Sir, The letter from Miss May citing the differences in various currency exchange rates over the past 30 years is, of course, of little relevance in itself. What matters is the purchasing power of the various currencies, as the result of inflationary fluctuations in the different countries, over the 30 years.

In my view the real relevance of her letter is that it reminds the reader that a single currency can only be achieved with single economic control over the whole of the community.

Her conclusion, asking why we should entrust our Government with control of our economy, begs the question of whom she would prefer to control our economy.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN EVETT,
High View House,
Rue de la Bonne Fleur,
St Andrews, Guernsey, CI.
December 21.

Shades of Vichy

From Mr John Redwood, MP for Wokingham (Conservative)

Sir, John Critchley's letter today misjudges which politicians have the scent of "Vichy defeatism" in their nostrils. It is not those of us who wish to keep this nation as a self-governing democracy. It is rather those Liberal and Labour politicians who would give this country away, passing control of our economy and money to the unelected officials of Frankfurt and Brussels. Opposition to them is the way to victory, not to disaster.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN REDWOOD,
House of Commons.
December 27.

Future of Royal Yacht

From Mr Don Paterson

Sir, Having read the letter from the joint chairmen of the Greenwich Britannia Project (December 17), I look forward to the decommissioning of the Royal Yacht, which should be sold off to the highest bidder on the understanding that absolutely no lottery money is given to support any future project involving this vessel.

Nor should any public funds be given to construct or run a replacement but, if business concerns are foolish enough to pay for a new Royal Yacht, that is fine.

Yours faithfully,
D. R. PATERSON,
31 Byron Road,
Selsdon, South Croydon, Surrey.
December 17.

Gulf War illness

From Earl Baldwin of Bewdley and others

Sir, In all the coverage about Gulf War illness and questions to Ministers it seems to be overlooked that it has been the House of Lords that has been the running, in the person of the Countess of Mar. Her relentless questioning over a period of years has forced the present concessions and has earned her the respect of all sides of the House.

We think credit should be given where it is due.

Yours faithfully,
BALDWIN OF BEWDLEY,
BRIDGES,
CHALFONT,
HYLTON-FOSTER,
KINLOSS,
SLIM,
TENBY,
BERNARD WEATHERILL
(Convenor, crossbench peers),
House of Lords.
December 18.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Case for returning Elgin Marbles

From Mr Peter Spring

Sir, You make an eloquent and reasonable case in "No Elgin, no marbles" (leading article, December 21) for retention in the British Museum of the Parthenon frieze and pediment sculptures. Unfortunately you have ducked completely the most serious question: what happens if circumstances change as the result of the introduction of charging for entry to the museum?

If, due to what one can only assume is unstated government policy, access to the marbles requires payment, is not the case for retaining them fatally weakened?

Yours faithfully,
PETER SPRING,
155 Elms Crescent, SW4.
December 21.

From Mr Martin Hasseck

Sir, Your first leader today is specious. You state, correctly, that "Many now see Lord Elgin as a thief... and the sculptures as stolen goods that should be given back to their rightful Greek owners". The rest of the leader is irrelevant. They should be returned.

Yours faithfully,
M. HASSECK,
104 Holders Hill Road, NW4.
December 21.

From Mr Zachary Goldring

Sir, The British Museum has pieces of the Parthenon and the Greeks, understandably, would like them back. Not a photograph, not a copy, but the original inimitable marble carvings. If your arguments were followed

the Sphinx could be adequately restored by having a plaster beard attached to it (the original of that item also being in the BM). To their credit, the Egyptian authorities have declined to mar their ancient monument in such a manner.

The only real argument in the BM's favour is, why should it return national treasures until similar repositories across the world agree to do the same? Currently there seems little likelihood of this happening.

As for the rest of your leading article: Bah, humbug!

Yours truly,
ZACK GOLDRING,
2 The Fern,
Larkfield, Aylesford, Kent.
December 22.

From Mrs Margaret E. Stewardson

Sir, Since, as you point out, the expertise is now available to produce excellent reproductions, why should there not be a complete replicated sequence of the Parthenon frieze in London, and the originals be returned to Athens?

Yours faithfully,
MARGARET E. STEWARDSON,
77 Burford Road,
Witney, Oxfordshire.
December 23.

From Mrs Maria Hattersley-Smith

Sir, Would the Scots have welcomed back a copy of the Stone of Scone?

Yours faithfully,
M. HATTERSLEY-SMITH
(née Kefallinou),
The Crossways, Cranbrook, Kent.
December 22.

The risk business

From Professor Emeritus L. E. J. Roberts

Sir, Dr John Adams (letter, December 17) argues that averaged values of risks of death or injury are a poor guide to decisions that must be taken by an individual. But statistics can be refined to be more useful.

To take his own example: a young man who realises that he is 100 times more likely to die in a road accident than a middle-aged woman, and that violence claims more lives than disease in his age group, may be persuaded to take more care of his car, his driving and his behaviour. He has a right to know what risks he runs.

Further, averaged risk statistics are of value in comparing risks to society as a whole, and in establishing trends over a period of time. For example, mortality in middle-aged men in England and Wales in 1988 due to heart attacks was over three times that in France and nearly six times that in Japan. Are we satisfied that our record is improving rapidly enough?

Wider publication of risk statistics

should be welcome. Arguments about their interpretation, will assist public understanding and "the optimum apportionment of our resources and lead eventually to a healthier, safer society."

Yours faithfully,
LEWIS ROBERTS,
Penfold Wick, Church Hill,
Chilton, Didcot, Oxfordshire.
December 18.

From Professor Emeritus Felix Weinberg, FRS

Sir, Surely we already have the "simple measure of risk" called for by the Royal Statistical Society and Nigel Hawkes (Mind and Matter, December 9). It's called, "How much does it cost to insure against it?" The unit, being the pound, is universally understood and the assessment is presumably accurate, since in general it is carried out by people whose livelihood depends on getting their sums right.

Yours faithfully,
FELIX WEINBERG,
59 Vicarage Road, SW14.
December 17.

Legal paperwork

From Mr John Brindley

Sir, The report (December 18) on the number of forms required to prosecute a young person for an act of violence (the figure of 46 was mentioned) again raised this important issue.

Significantly, the vast majority of defendants plead guilty in magistrates' courts, which means that the standard assault file submitted by the police to the CPS need only include crucial witness statements and about six essential documents: the young person's details; a charge sheet; the police view as to why a prosecution is appropriate; the defendant's previous record; the victim's claim for compensation; and a short note of the police interview with the defendant.

These new abbreviated file stan-

dards were recommended by independent consultants, approved by an efficiency scrutiny and agreed early this year by the Trials Issues Group, which promotes improvements in procedures in the criminal justice system and comprises representatives of its main agencies, including senior police officers. Police forces are in the process of implementing the introduction of these new files.

In the minority of cases where young persons plead not guilty additional witness statements may be required, but usually the number of forms included in a prosecution file need not increase dramatically.

Yours sincerely,
J. F. BRINDLEY
(Chairman), Trials Issues Group,
Room 710, 50 Ludgate Hill, EC4.
December 20.

Top-up fees

From Mr G. Ashley

Sir, To ensure survival it may be necessary for universities to charge top-up fees (report, December 13) but the effect on the student mix will be severe. The decline in the grant and the ever-increasing loan burden which a student has to bear are already restricting choice of university and course to those obtainable near the parental home, so as to save on maintenance costs.

The imposition of a top-up fee, even though accompanied by generous provision for remission, will only reduce further the proportion of young people from poor homes applying to enter universities.

Those undertaking higher educa-

tion cannot all expect better career prospects than their peers. In your article on August 20 it was made clear that this only applied to the product of a small number of universities. The great majority will have to take their turn in the employment queue — and repay large loans for what might turn out to have been a dubious benefit.

Government should think again about financing universities if it does not wish to see them the sole preservers of the comfortably-off. But perhaps it does?

Yours faithfully,
G. ASHLEY
(Registrar, London School of Economics, 1988-84),
15 Birchies Nook Road,
Stockfield, Northumberland.
December 14.

South Atlantic links

From the UK Representative of the Falkland Islands Government

Sir, The Argentine Ambassador (letter, December 18) overlooks the main stumbling block to the resumption of normal relations between the Falkland Islands and Argentina. He knows that the people of the Falkland Islands would welcome both a neighbourly relationship with Argentina and the prospect of Argentines being able to visit the islands, but that such circumstances are simply not acceptable to the Islanders whilst Argentina continues to lay claim to the Falklands.

We have always sought a state of peaceful coexistence with Argentina and have welcomed the progress that

their young democracy has made since 1982. However, their claim to the islands was written into their Constitution as recently as 1994 and, as such, represents a continuing threat to the security and wellbeing of the islanders.

Far from "widening the divide" as Ambassador Pflüger suggests, the islanders are merely seeking Argentine acceptance of British sovereignty over the islands on a permanent basis so that what he calls "the dark hours of 1982" are never repeated.

Yours faithfully,
SUKEY CAMERON,
Falkland Islands Government,
London Office,
Falkland House,
14 Broadway, Westminster, SW1.
December 19.

New year plea for London's walkers

From Mr Stephen O'Brien

Sir, Many Londoners and visitors to the capital will have noticed the resurfacing work currently being carried out on Horse Guards Parade adjacent to St James's Park. The lack of cars both on Horse Guards Road and the Parade has made the area quieter and considerably enhances the view towards Whitehall from the park.

As thoughts turn to new year resolutions, I have one for London. We should resolve to improve the environment for walkers. Let us start by closing off both Horse Guards Road and the parade permanently to cars and then rejoin the park and the parade as originally designed. At the same time let us give all the encouragement we can to Sir Norman Foster and Westminster Council to come up with exciting improvements both for Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square.

Let 1997 be the year of the pedestrian.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN O'BRIEN
(Chief Executive),
London First,
Cannon House, 6 Tothill Street, SW1.
December 18.

Royal parks cuts

From Dame Jennifer Jenkins

Sir, The way the Department of National Heritage has carved up its budget shows that he who shouts loudest gets most. London's Royal Parks, which have no outdoor, will next year suffer a £1.5 million cut in budget of £23.2 million, making a reduction of over 12 per cent in two years.

The Royal Parks Agency was set up only in April 1993, when the ground works were contracted out. Apart from the Royal Parks Constabulary, it has a very small management team, and unlike some other organisations has limited opportunities for revenue earning.

Perhaps the consultative committee set up to help the agency should be given an independent chairman (as the Royal Parks Review Group recommended) rather than a civil servant who can only whisper.

Yours faithfully,
JENNIFER JENKINS
(Chairman, Royal Parks Review Group, 1991-96),
2 Kensington Park Gardens, W11.
December 26.

So that's all right

From Mr Shaun W. Thorpe

Sir, Fear not: plum pudding and mince pies are not illegal ("Pudding hatters find relief in law", December 23). This canard is regularly resurrected in the Christmas silly season. There is no such 17th-century statute of Cromwell on the statute book.

As for the "Christmas Act of 1448" requiring "traders to empty their windows on Christmas Eve", this is probably a reference to the Sunday Fairs Act 1448, which was repealed in 1969, as was the Act of Uniformity of 1531 requiring church attendance over Christmas.

Yours faithfully,
SHAUN W. THORPE,
53 Willow Vale,
Shepherds Bush, W12.
December 23.

From Mrs Jacqueline Toms

Sir, I believe that Christmas puddings and mince pies can be eaten without fear of imprisonment. According to Sir George Clark in the Oxford History of England:

None of the acts [of Cromwell's Parliament] which would normally have required the participation of the King could be regarded as valid.

Therefore Cromwell's legislation is, in the main, no longer operative.

Yours faithfully,
JACQUELINE TOMS,
1 Locke Gardens,
Langley, Slough, Berkshire.
December 23.

Jazz scores

From Mr Michael Webber

Sir, Your jazz critic is in error if he thinks the Park Lane Group presented the first jazz concert in the Queen Elizabeth Hall in 1973 (Arts, December 18).

I cannot remember what happened in the States but I presented my first Louis Armstrong anniversary concert (with a galaxy of British talent) in that hall on July 4, 1970, a Louis Armstrong memorial in 1971 and several others before 1973.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL WEBBER,
The Garden Flat,
19 Netherhall Gardens, NW3.
December 18.

Looking back

From Mr John Merrett

Sir, You report today that John Major has been named as personality of the year 1996 in a poll conducted by the BBC *Today* programme.

I refuse, Sir, to believe that 1996 was that bad a year.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MERRETT,
24 Broadless Park, Deves, Wiltshire.
December 27.



COURT CIRCULAR

YORK HOUSE
ST JAMES'S PALACE
December 28: The Duke of Kent, Colonel, was represented by Colonel John Clavering

at the funeral of Colonel Murray de Klee, Scots Guards, which was held at Torosay Church, Isle of Mull, this afternoon.

Forthcoming marriage

Mr C.M. Mackendrick and Miss S. Mackey
The engagement is announced between the son of Mr and Mrs Kerry Mackendrick, of Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire, and Susan, daughter of Mr John Mackey and Mrs Ursula Mackey, of Sacramento, California. The marriage will take place in Los Angeles, California, on June 7, 1997.

Latest wills

Frank Tyldesley, of Llandudno, Gwynedd, left £2,798,666 net.
Philip William Ralph Pope, of West Stafford, Dorchester, Dorset, left £1,508,829 net.
Mary Angela Robinson, of Oxford, Surrey, left £1,508,829 net.
She left £1,000 to All Saints Catholic Church, Oxford Building Fund, and £1,000 to the Church of St. Francis, of Framingham Earl, Norfolk, left £1,243,342 net.

Anniversaries

TODAY

BIRTHS: Alexander Keith Johnston, geographer, Penicuik, 1804; Samuel Phillips, journalist, 1814; Thomas Woodrow Wilson, 28th American President 1913-21, Staunton, Virginia, 1856; Pio Baroja y Nessi, novelist, San Sebastian, Spain, 1872; Sir Arthur Eddington, astronomer, Kendal, Cumbria, 1882.

DEATHS: St Francis de Sales, Doctor of the Church, 1622; Queen Mary II, reigned with King William III 1689-94, London, 1694; Pierre Bayle, philosopher, 1706; Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1st Baron Macaulay, poet, historian and statesman, London, 1859; George Gissing, novelist, St Jean de Luz, France, 1903; Maurice Ravel, composer, Paris, 1937; Theodore Dreiser, novelist, Hollywood, 1945; Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy 1900-46, Egypt, 1947; Jack Lovelock, surfer, Olympic 1500m gold medalist 1936, killed in an accident, New York, 1949; Paul Hindemith, composer, Frankfurt am Main, 1963.

The Tay Bridge collapsed, 1879.
The first weather reports relayed by wireless telegraphy were published in London, 1904.

The Peak District was designated Britain's first national park, 1950.

TOMORROW

BIRTHS: Charles Macintosh, pioneer of waterproofing, Africa, 1952.

Glasgow, 1766; Andrew Johnson, 17th American President 1865-69, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1888; William Ewart Gladstone, Prime Minister 1868-74, 1880-85, 1892-94, Liverpool, 1899; Pablo Casals, cellist, Vendrell, Spain, 1876.

DEATHS: Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1170; Thomas Sydenham, physician, London, 1689; Brook Taylor, mathematician, London, 1731; Jacques-Louis David, painter, Brussels, 1825; Charles Lamb, essayist, Edmonton, Middlesex, 1834; Christina Rossetti, poet, London, 1894; Sir William Osler, physician, Oxford, 1919; Rainer Maria Rilke, poet, Valmont, Switzerland, 1926; Elyn Phillips, novelist, Broad Chyn, near Exeter, 1960; Paul Whitehead, band-leader, Doylestown, Pennsylvania, 1967; Maurice Harold Macmillan, 1st Earl of Stockton, Prime Minister 1957-63, Sussex, 1986.

Radio Luxembourg began broadcasting, 1930.
The Irish Free State changed its name to Eire when the new constitution was implemented, 1937.

German planes dropped 10,000 bombs on London, 1940.

The first transistor hearing aid went on sale in America, 1951.

A coelacanth, a prehistoric fish believed to be extinct, was caught off the coast of South Africa, 1952.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

Take heart, my children. Cry out to God and he will answer from the power of your names. *Baruch 4: 1-21*

BIRTHS

WILSON - On December 28th, at the Portland Hospital, a beautiful son, *James Wilson*, born to *Mr and Mrs James Wilson*. A brother for *James*.

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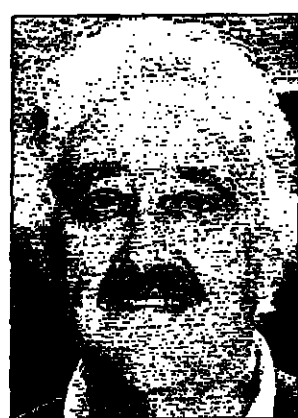
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Weekend birthdays



Noel Johnson, radio's original Dick Barton, special agent, is 80 today; Bernard Cribbins, the actor, will be 68 tomorrow



TODAY:
Air Commodore Molly Allott, former director, WRAF, 78; Mr W.A. Camps, former Master, Pembroke College, Cambridge, 86; Mr D.B. Carr, former cricketer, 70; Miss Madeleine Craggs, secretary, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, 51; Mr T.W. Gould, VC, 82; Mr Max Hastings, Editor, *Evening Standard*, 51; Mr Roy Hattersley, MP, 64; Professor F.P. Kelly, FRGS, statistician, 46; Mr Nigel Kennedy, violinist, 40; Mr Martin Lowthorpe, chairman, Transport Development Group, 61; Mr Michael J.P. Marks, deputy chairman, Metall International, 55; Mr Michael Marks, educator, 62; Mrs Francis Morrell, former leader, ILEA, 59; Sir Patrick O'Connor, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 82; Mrs Bridget Prentice, MP, 44; Mr Simon Raven, author and dramatist, 69; Mrs Joan Ruggie, MP, 53; Dame Maggie Smith, actress, 68.

TOMORROW:
June Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, 83; Sir Richard Beaumont, diplomat, 84; Lord Beaverbrook, 85; Sir Samuel Brittan, journalist, 63; Mr John Cornwell, former chairman, Distillers Company, 72; Mr Ted Danson, actor, 49; Miss Ann Demeulemeester, fashion designer, 37; Baroness Denton of Wakefield, 61; General Sir Robert Ford, 73; Mr Andrew Foster, controller, Audit Commission for Local Authorities and the NHS in England and Wales, 52; Professor L.C.B. Gower, former Vice-Chancellor, Southampton University, 83; Mr David Hall, former Chief Constable, Humberside, 66; Sir Simon Hornby, president, Royal Horticultural Society, 62; Mr Terry Lewis, MP, 61.

Mr Martin Offiah, rugby league player, 30; Mrs Rosalind Preston, former president, National Council of Women of Great Britain, 61; Mr Peter Robinson, MP, 48; The Right Rev Mark Sanner, Bishop of Birmingham, 60; Sir Kenneth Sharp, accountant, 70; Mr Harvey Smith, showjumper, 58; Mr Jon Voight, actor, 58; Sir Edward Williams, former commissioner-general, Expo 88, Brisbane, 75.

Church services tomorrow

First Sunday after Christmas

BELFAST CATHEDRAL: 10.11 HC: 3.30

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL: 9.15 HC: 1.15

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THE TIMES
NEW YEAR PERIOD
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Take heart, my children. Cry out to God and he will answer from the power of your names. *Baruch 4: 1-21*

BIRTHS

WILSON - On December 28th, at the Portland Hospital, a beautiful son, *James Wilson*, born to *Mr and Mrs James Wilson*. A brother for *James*.

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DEATHS

OBITUARIES

Gwilym Lewis, DFC, First World War fighter ace, died on December 17 aged 99. He was born on August 5, 1897.

In a series of letters home which are sustained masterpieces of understatement, Gwilym Lewis conveyed with graphic simplicity the realities of the life of a fighter pilot in the years 1916-18. The letters, sent to his father from France where he served successively with 32 and 40 Squadrons, are extraordinary examples of the boyish resilience which characterised the young fighting men of the period.

The deadly grapple with the enemy in the thin air at high altitude over the Western Front is treated almost with matter of factness. Death — often a matter of protracted agony in those days before the parachute permitted escape from a stricken or burning aircraft — takes place as yet another item on the agenda of daily squadron life. "The ninth [of the squadron's pilots to be killed] was Godlee... He crashed well on our side of the lines and died soon after. He was a pukka Anzac and a jolly good fellow," Lewis observes matter-of-factly, as aerial combat steadily thins the ranks of No 32 Squadron in the summer of 1916, in spite of the technical superiority enjoyed by the Royal Flying Corps over the German Air Force at that juncture.

Unlike his elder brother Edmund, who was shot down and killed while taking on five German fighters in December 1916, Gwilym Lewis was to survive to serve in the Second World War and enjoy a ripe old age. But though he retained an intense interest in aviation all his life and became life president of 32 Squadron, he never flew again. Towards the end of his wartime flying career in 1918 the letters do finally betray the immense strain of non-stop combat. And although flying had been Lewis's life since he had passed his civilian pilot's licence on a Graham White Box Kite in 1915, he elected not to remain in the fledgling RAF at the end of the war; thereafter his career was in the City.

Gwilym Hugh Lewis was born in Birmingham of Welsh parents. His mother was a from a clerical background but his father was in insurance. When Lewis was five the family moved to Croydon and he went to Whitgift Grammar School and then to Marlborough.

When war came he volunteered to join the Northampton Regiment and was commissioned as a second lieutenant. But, by his own account, he found life in the infantry irksome and applied to join the Royal Flying Corps. The RFC's current intake was full and



he was told to take a civilian licence as a first step to a career in military aviation. With £100 borrowed from his father he enrolled in the London and Provincial flying school at Hendon. There, after only four hours of somewhat rudimentary instruction, he was awarded his certificate in November 1915.

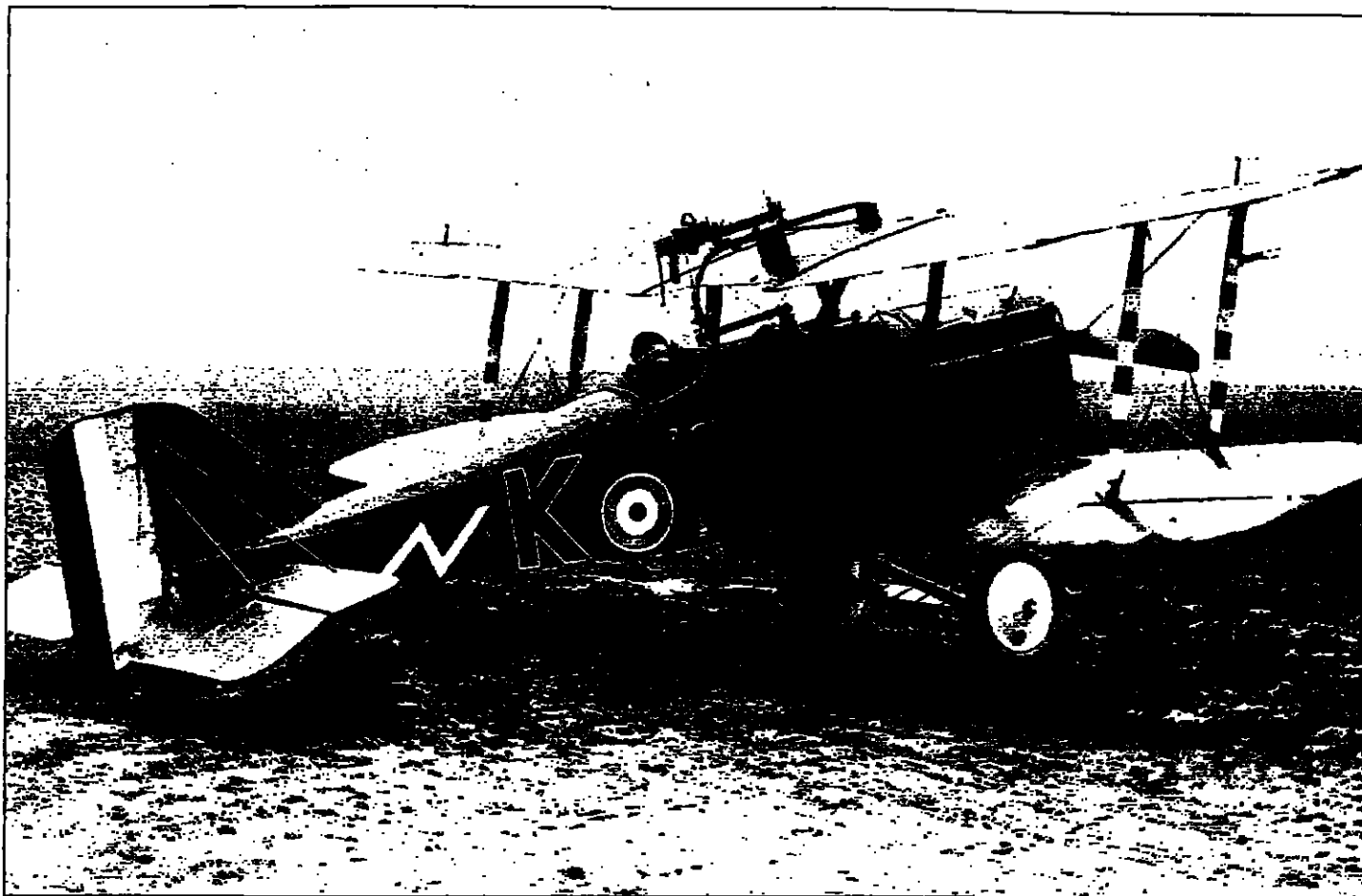
Accepted, as a result, for flying training with the RFC, he took his wings at the Central Flying School, Upavon, in the spring of 1916. He was then posted, as its youngest pilot, to No 32 Squadron, commanded by another Welshman, Major Lionel Rees, who was subsequently to win the VC. In May 1916, with the Battle of the Somme impending, No 32 and its DH2 scouts — a flimsy looking, but surprising effective contraption with a "pusher" propeller — were ordered to France. The mere cross channel flight was hazardous enough, with engines prone to stop without warning, quite apart from the likelihood of encountering the enemy.

Lewis instinctively took to the life

of the RFC and his letters of this period bubble with an almost childish enthusiasm. Even the first, fearsome contacts with the enemy seem unable to shake his composure and, in one of his early letters home, he describes air fighting thus: "It is a most extraordinary game. Better than football, yet something of the same. It is the same feeling to charge a Hun who sees you as it is to collar one of the biggest chaps in the scrum." No 32 became one of the most feared squadrons operating over the British First Army, and in that golden period before the appearance of the "flying circus" of Boelcke and von Richtofen the German Air Force was virtually banished from the skies over the Western Front.

Lewis was involved in action with 32 Squadron continuously until November 1916. His appendix had been troubling him for some months and eventually he was invalided home to have it removed. After another spell at Central Flying School, this time training novice aviators throughout most of

GWILYM LEWIS



Lewis on his promotion to captain in 1918 and, above, at the controls of his SESA, "The Artful Dodger"

1917, Lewis was back in France in December of that year, as a flight commander in 40 Squadron, one of the most celebrated in the RFC. This flew the SESA, a more sophisticated aircraft than the DH2, and one which was to help re-establish air superiority over the Germans who had wrested it from the British early in 1917.

There he was in company with some of the most famous names in First World War flying. Major "Mick" Mannock, later to become the top-scoring British ace with 73 kills before his own death in action in July 1918, took Lewis under his wing and the two men became close friends. For the next six months 40 Squadron was to be in the thick of some of the most intense of the air combat as the Germans fought back with their new Albatros scouts and Fokker Triplanes.

Like his fellow pilots, life for Lewis was a constant brush with death. In the open cockpit of the SESA it was possible to pass out from lack of oxygen at over 20,000 feet and on several occasions he jerked himself back to consciousness to find his aircraft plunging earthwards. On another occasion, while flying extremely low in search of

ground targets to strafe, Lewis was lucky not to sustain at least severe injury when a wingtip struck the ground and his aircraft rolled over several times before coming to a halt, a total wreck. Disdaining medical attention he hitched a lift back to his base in the car of a passing colonel. Besides enemy aircraft — for which Lewis never showed anything but a healthy respect — one of the constant perils of life above the battlefield, was enemy anti-aircraft gun fire for which relatively slow-moving aircraft provided an easy target.

By this time Lewis's toll of the enemy was itself mounting, and although he never achieved the astronomical scores of men like Mannock, Bishop, Ball and McCudden, he was to end the war with a tally of 12 kills, qualifying him as an ace. A reticent man — Mannock dubbed him "Noisy" because of his self-effacing personality — he was never one to make wild claims and was always extremely critical of his own gunnery. Lewis was not only a fine pilot but was also respected as a flight commander. None of the novices posted to his flight was ever lost in action.

In July 1918 Lewis was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The decoration had been instituted only the previous month to acknowledge the distinctive feats of what had by then become the Royal Air Force. To that point the RFC's officers had been awarded MCs for similar acts of bravery. As his letters of this period betray, Lewis was by then exhausted. "I am going home via hospital," he informs his father at this juncture. "I have been feeling a pretty good physical wreck lately, so I got an MO to examine me, and he stopped me flying."

It was the end of his war. After three weeks' leave he joined the Central Flying School where he remained until he was demobilised in January 1919. At one point he had toyed with the idea of staying in the RAF but this had lost its appeal by the end of the war. His father found him a job with the Lloyds insurance brokers Sedgwick Collins.

It was a change of pace and direction for a man who had been used to leading his young charges in the heat of battle, but he adjusted to it and came to enjoy the work. Joining a new non-marine syndi-

cate founded by Harry Sedgwick, Lewis became a member of Lloyds and travelled to America for the firm, eventually founding an American non-marine department.

By the outbreak of the Second World War this was thriving, but a new challenge beckoned and Lewis found himself back in uniform as a wing commander RAFVR, as part of Churchill's team at the Cabinet War Room. There his task was to prepare reports on the previous 24 hours for the daily briefing.

He kept in touch with his firm throughout this period and returned to Lloyds after the war. He subsequently joined another firm, Arbon Langrish, becoming chairman until 1965 when it merged with Clarksons. At his death he was the oldest member of Lloyds. A book, *Wings Over the Somme 1916-1918*, a collection of Lewis's letters and a diary he wrote in France was published in 1976. A revised edition incorporating letters from his brother Edmund was published in 1995.

Gwilym Lewis married, in 1925, Christian Robertson. She died in 1993 and he is survived by a son and two daughters. Another son died young.

ALAN GRAHAM APLEY

Alan Graham Apley, orthopaedic surgeon and teacher, died on December 20 aged 82. He was born on November 10, 1914.

ONE of the greatest teachers of orthopaedic surgery in recent times, Alan Graham Apley's lecturing technique was always compelling. His classic textbook *Apley's System of Orthopaedics and Fractures* (1959), a honed blend of fact, clarity and organisation, is now in its seventh edition. Apley himself was amused to learn that it earned the highest rate of fines for overdue books in St Thomas's Hospital Medical School library and flattered that a pirate edition of it was produced in the Middle East.

The book evolved from the text for a course which Apley initiated at the Rowley Bristow Orthopaedic Hospital, Pyrford. Although an accomplished surgeon, Apley also nurtured an outstanding talent for teaching. As a young man, appointed to his first consultant post at the Rowley Bristow in 1947, he immediately worked to set up a course to teach orthopaedics to trainee surgeons. The course — which still runs today — was always over-subscribed and in addition to the one hundred students fortunate enough to gain



a place, several more would attend as observers. Many owed their success in final specialist examinations largely to Apley, and it was partly due to their subsequent voting power that he was later elected by a large majority to the council of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1973.

Alan Graham Apley was the youngest son of a Jewish immigrant from Poland.

Apley was born in London and brought up first in Soho and then in Battersea where he went to St Ethelburga's school. There he came top of all London in the 11-plus equivalent of the day. But he was prevented from reaping the full rewards of his achievement because of his background. This episode coloured his attitude to religion and he

later abandoned his faith.

He attended Regent Street Polytechnic and then University College Hospital from which he qualified in medicine in 1938.

Towards the end of the Second World War, Apley served in the Royal Army Medical Corps. On demobilisation in 1947 he was appointed consultant surgeon at the Rowley Bristow and it was there that he came under the influence of the pioneering orthopaedic surgeon George Perkins. Inspired by his example, Apley harnessed his own talents to great effect, most notably in teaching, and it was only a year after his appointment that he set up what was to become an internationally renowned teaching course. It was also while he was at the Rowley Bristow that he designed one of the first purpose-built accident and emergency centres in the South of England, at St Peter's Hospital in Chertsey.

In 1972 Apley was appointed director of the orthopaedics department at St Thomas's Hospital which developed an international reputation under his guidance. He was an outspoken critic of recent National Health Service reforms, perceiving them as placing erroneous emphasis on commercial aspects of this most vital service. Managers,

he thought, had become too concerned with budgets to the detriment of more important issues such as the teaching, training and professional standards of patient care.

On his retirement from the NHS Apley remained much in demand. He became editor of the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery* which under him matured into the world class journal which it is today. He was particularly noted for his constructive rejection letters which were always instructive and encouraging. He also continued to lecture widely around the world, particularly in Canada where a satellite course to his own orthopaedic course was set up.

Apley was a keen sportsman and was a founder of the orthopaedic ski club which was pioneering in its combination of work and pleasure. However, his main recreation was music. He was an accomplished pianist, and when not at his study desk could often be found seated at his Steinway. He was particularly devoted to the music of Bach.

His first wife, Janie, whom he married in 1939 and supported him indefatigably, died in 1986 after a long illness. Apley married a second time to Violet in 1988. He is survived by her as well as by a daughter and son of his first marriage.

PROFESSOR STEPHEN REES JONES

Professor Stephen Rees Jones, art conservationist, died on December 17 aged 87. He was born on September 1, 1909.

ONE of the pioneers of modern methods of art conservation, Stephen Rees Jones was head of the technology department at the Courtauld Institute of Art for 25 years, from 1951 to 1976. His role as a scientist at the heart of the world's most celebrated and rarefied citadel of art history was uniquely influential.

Under his benign but perceptive gaze generations of art history students learned that the paintings they had thought of as abstract works of genius or baffling iconographical puzzles were real physical objects made of identifiable materials by fallible human hands. Moreover, they were objects subject to the vicissitudes of decay and restoration and Rees Jones's great contribution to the world of art was to rationalise in scientific terms the ways in which paintings change as they age.

Stephen Rees Jones was educated at Holywell Grammar School, Flintshire, and the University College of North Wales, Bangor, where he gained a BSc in physics and an MSc for research into X-ray diffraction. In 1935 he was appointed research assistant in the recently established scientific department of the Courtauld Institute of Art, and his analytical expertise was invaluable in the increasingly sophisticated fields of pigment identification and X-radiography.

As a result, the Courtauld Institute became one of the most important centres in the world for the technical examination of art.

During the war years, Rees Jones left the academic world to take charge of the laboratories of the Ministry of Aircraft Production that dealt with light alloy castings. Rejoining the Courtauld Institute after the war, he became head of the technology department in 1951. The department was not actually in the beautiful Adam house at 20 Portman Square — the Institute's home until it moved to Somerset House in 1990 — but in the mews buildings at the back, approached across the famous garden where art history stu-



dents lunched and smoked and sprawled through countless London summers.

The technology department itself was a warren of tiny rooms crammed with easels, microscopes and photographic equipment and students poring over paintings, books, X-rays on light boxes. This was the wonderful, quirky domain that Rees Jones presided over with charm and good humour and nobody who worked or studied there has ever forgotten it or him.

In the 1960s research programmes were begun in key areas of conservation, including solvent action in the cleaning of paintings and the structural treatment of paintings on canvas. Rees Jones designed and made the first hot-table for lining canvases — still exhibited in the present department as a landmark in the history of conservation.

During the 1960s the regular courses in the scientific examination and conservation of paintings for which the Technology Department became best known were established and these became

formalised into the present three-year diploma in 1976. Throughout the whole period that Rees Jones was creating an internationally important department — for which he was awarded a personal Chair in the Courtauld Institute — he was also, with a few colleagues, actively promoting the emerging conservation profession worldwide.

Their most significant initiative resulted in the foundation of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) in 1950 which remains the principal international body of its kind. Rees Jones was one of its founder fellows, its treasurer and the first editor of *IIC Abstracts*.

He was closely involved with the organisation of IIC's first International Congress in Rome in 1961, which was the first of many such conferences that were to transform the way in which conservation was perceived by the wider academic world. When national efforts of IIC were set up he was instrumental in the founding of the UK group and

became its chairman.

His own research interests were many, various and sometimes marvellously esoteric. His extensive published work ranged from a classic technical examination of the Coronation Chair, carried out just before the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, to a history of the artist's palette in terms of chromatography. In the 1960s, he became caught up in one of the periodic cleaning controversies and his paper on the subject published in the *Burlington Magazine* in 1962, was remarkable for its dignity and reason in the fevered atmosphere of the moment. His lectures were famous for their ability to make the most complex of technical issues understandable to scientifically illiterate art historians — not by talking down to them but by the total lucidity of his reasoning.

He retired from the Courtauld Institute in 1976, but continued teaching and advising. In the year before his retirement he was appointed Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Academy of Arts and for ten years gave an annual course on the principles of colour and light that became required viewing for practising painters and art students. He also continued to publish academic papers from his Sussex home, working on mathematical models for the material nature of works of art and how they interacted with moisture and light.

Rees Jones was an immensely kind and likeable man, admired and fondly recalled by the many students he taught. Small of stature, alert and quizzical in expression, he would regard one obliquely, the suspicion of amusement suddenly becoming a disarming smile.

His contribution to the world of conservation must be measured both by his own considerable achievements and by the legacy of the leading conservators around the world who owe their expertise to him. He himself seems to have founded something of a conservation dynasty: one of his sons (also Stephen) is a conservator and also became head of the technology department at the Courtauld Institute and a granddaughter is a gifted archaeological scientist.

FATHER OF HOUSE OF COMMONS

MR. LLOYD GEORGE

Mr. Lloyd George's impending resignation will remove from the House of Commons one who at the height of his powers a generation ago was destined to be, as Mr. Churchill is today, the nation's war leader through critical years.

In 1908 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and this key post he held through a long period of fierce political controversy in which he became a central figure. His first Budget of 1909 he characteristically described as a "war Budget"; and the war he then had in mind was against poverty and squalor. As recalled by the chairman at yesterday's meeting of the Caernarvon Liberal executive, Mr. Lloyd George "before the last war laid the foundations of the great social services which are now an integral part of our economic and social life." When Germany plunged Europe into war in 1914 he played an unforgettable part which belongs to world history. From the Exchequer he transferred in 1915 to the new Ministry of Munitions, and in 1916 he became Secretary of State for War. He succeeded Mr. Asquith as Prime Minister in 1916, and he continued in this office until the break-up of

ON THIS DAY

December 28, 1944

David Lloyd George, 1st Earl Lloyd George of Dwyfor (1863-1945), was 82 when he was returned as member for Caernarvon Boroughs by a majority of only 18 votes. After 1922 he never held office again.

The second Coalition Government in 1922. There will be widely felt regret, not limited to the House of Commons, that the member for Caernarvon Boroughs, the Father of the House (as well as of two of its outstanding members), does not intend to offer himself for re-election. So ends a unique political career, which in mere length equals back without a break to 1890, when the young David Lloyd George was elected as a supporter of Mr. Gladstone, and which for the greatness of its achievements is for ever memorable in history. In the hour of danger he became "the greatest War Minister since Chatham" — such was the authoritative judgment of his

colleague Lord Milner — and, without overpassing his proper respect for colleagues and subordination to Parliament, the most powerful Welshman since Henry VIII.

His retirement is timed to follow upon the consummation of the supreme task, the destruction of the German menace, of which in its earlier phase he was the protagonist. It will recall innumerable memories of the sufferings and triumphs of a generation ago, the more so that the national leadership has now passed to one who was himself Mr. Lloyd George's assistant in many a fight of those heroic days. In nothing was the then Prime Minister's war leadership more truly representative of the nation he led than in the quality that his present successor has singled out, his "peculiar power of drawing from misfortune itself the means of future success." If that phrase leads the mind on to thoughts of our present determination to build upon the foundations ravaged by war a fairer social order than the British people have yet enjoyed, it will not be thereby diverted from the life's work of David Lloyd George. The whole modern conception of social service... derives from the pioneer work done by Mr. Lloyd George as the dominant figure in home affairs of the great Liberal Government of Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith.

John 4:16-1:50

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY DECEMBER 28 1996

Directors to share almost £2.6m in payoffs and options

Golden goodbyes at Northern

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

DIRECTORS of Northern Electric will share almost £2.6 million in payoffs and options after the company's £782 million takeover by CE Electric of America.

The payments, arising from Northern's defeat in a bitterly fought battle, will increase to more than £2.5 million the windfall due to utility chiefs after their privatised companies succumbed to takeover bids.

The payoffs will increase the Labour Party, which has mounted a relentless campaign against high salaries

and compensation packages for utility chiefs.

Its Treasury team, which is preparing to impose a windfall tax on the privatised utilities should Labour win the general election, recently highlighted payoffs and benefits totalling £19 million for utility directors involved in takeovers.

Those figures were compiled before Northern's takeover and before the agreed bids for East Midlands and London Electricity. Protests greeted the announcement of a £1.6 million payment to William Courtney, 71, chairman of Southern Water when it was acquired by ScottishPower.

Northern directors will receive pay-offs worth £2.4 million and the four main directors will make share option profits of £170,000.

All Northern directors are entitled to two years' salary payment on termination of employment and it is likely that some pension consideration will be added.

It is not expected that Northern's board will survive more than a few weeks once CE Electric is fully installed, although one director could escape the axe.

Tony Hadfield, chief executive, will walk away with the largest package. On a salary

of £184,000 and with pension contributions last year of £131,000, he is likely to receive more than £700,000. Mr Hadfield will also make an instant £27,300 profit from share options. David Morris, chairman, can expect at least £550,000 to compensate for the loss of a £130,000 salary and £125,000 pension contributions. His share options will net a £40,000 profit.

The board will continue briefly into the new year as the full handover of the company is stalled by the holidays.

Northern has yet to advise shareholders to accept the offer after CE Electric scraped

to success by winning 50.3 per cent of acceptances on Christmas Eve. Large institutions, which had supported Northern's defence against the US group headed by CalEnergy, have also still to declare their hands.

Prudential lifted its stake in Northern to 12.27 per cent on Christmas Eve after a last-ditch attempt to save the company. It convinced investors with more than 900,000 shares to revoke acceptances and take the same amount of cash from the Pru. But it is thought likely that the hitherto forthright support from some groups, which also included

M&G and Foreign & Colonial, will crumble and they too will accept the 650p a share offer.

Of Northern's board it is thought that only Ron Dboon, the commercial director, will be able to survive under David Sokol, chairman and chief executive of CE Electric.

It is likely that a CalEnergy executive will step in to lead the Newcastle-based company and report to Mr Sokol.

Northern, which survived a hostile bid by Trafalgar House, will cease to be listed. It will be replaced in the FT-SE 250 index by Mayflower Corporation, the automotive design and components company.

B&Q poised to create 1,800 jobs

By MARTIN BARROW

B&Q, the do-it-yourself retailer, expects to create 1,800 jobs in 1997 through store openings and refurbishments.

The recruitment drive, which will increase B&Q's workforce by 10 per cent, takes place as DIY chains enjoy a sharp recovery in business as a result of the upturn in the housing market.

Most of the jobs will be available in B&Q's new Warehouse outlets, which serve the building trade as well as the DIY sector. Five new outlets, each employing up to 250 people, will open during 1997 at Coventry, Walsley in Merseyside, Bury near Manchester, Stockton-on-Tees and Enfield.

The rest of the new jobs will be created in B&Q Supercentres, the company's main chain, with ten new or refurbished outlets planned for 1997.

The new jobs will be evenly split between part-time and full-time staff. Older people will benefit from B&Q's policy of actively recruiting people aged over 50.

B&Q is Britain's leading DIY retailer, with a 15.9 per cent share of the market. The company has annual turnover of almost £13 billion. Earlier this month, B&Q, which is part of the Kingfisher retailing combine, said that like-for-like sales rose by 12.7 per cent in the third quarter.



Bill Whiting, managing director of B&Q Warehouse, which is due to open five new outlets next year

Nearly 1m escape homes equity trap

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

RECOVERY in the property market has freed 900,000 households from negative equity in 1996, the Nationwide Building Society says.

There are now 800,000 households with negative equity, down from 1.7 million at the end of 1995, the Nationwide says. It predicts a fall to 170,000 by the end of 1997 and to 40,000 by December 1998.

However, the society says that a "hard core" of negative equity will persist, particularly for buyers of starter homes and poor-quality flat conversions in the 1980s boom.

Release from negative equity has been particularly marked in London and the Home Counties, areas badly hit by the recession in the early

1990s. House prices in Greater London and the South-East have risen by more than 10 per cent in 1996, against a national average rise of 8.5 per cent.

Paul Sanderson, Nationwide head of research, said the recovery in the London property market was broadly based and would spread in 1997, particularly to the Midlands, South West and East Anglia.

In the past quarter, these regions have had underlying price rises of up to 1.9 per cent. Yorkshire and Humberside and the North West have seen a 1.7 per cent price rise, and prices in Northern Ireland rose 3 per cent. Wales and Scotland had rises of just 0.2 per cent and 0.5 per cent, respectively, in the quarter.

Actuaries warn on bond guarantees

By CAROLINE MERRELL

THE Institute of Actuaries has issued a strong warning about the sale of investment bonds with returns linked to rises in the UK stock market. Its warning comes amid growing concern about guarantees offered on these products.

Investors have poured millions into stock market bonds, attracted by their low-risk nature. Most are five-year investments which promise to pay a return if the market rises, but will only return the original investment if it falls.

The Institute claims the chances of receiving only the original sum are much higher than the banks, building societies and life insurance companies claim. Peter Nowell, chairman of the institute's life board, said:

"Marketing material makes great play of the fact that the UK and US equity indices have not fallen in any five-year period since 1984. Looking back further gives the chances of an index falling over five years at around 20 to 25 per cent. For some bonds this can make the difference between getting a 10.5 per cent per annum return or merely getting a return of capital."

The Personal Investment Authority is known to be investigating the marketing of bonds. If the PIA decides that the products have been misold, then it could order the product providers to offer customers a refund of their money.

Weekend Money, page 29

Sega takes a hit in game wars

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

SEGA Enterprises, the Japanese video game company, issued a profits warning yesterday as the three-way computer games console war continued to take its toll.

Sega said that it would be forced to take a ¥23 billion (£120 million) exceptional charge with its full-year results, blaming the need to write off supplies of its outdated 16-bit game players. The company said that it would either sell its unwanted products, which are valued at about ¥7 billion, at a discount or dispose of them.

Sega's 16-bit console is a victim of the aggressive battle for control of the games market as the three main console manufacturers concentrate on the more ad-



Nintendo, creator of Super Mario, is challenging Sega

vanced 32-bit and 64-bit machines. But Sega's 32-bit machine, the Sega Saturn, has also been struggling against competition from Sony's 32-

bit PlayStation. Earlier this month WH Smith said it would no longer be selling Sega Saturn games, hitting sales over the Christmas per-

iod when about 25 per cent of all computer games purchases are made. Smith said consumer demand in its shops was targeted towards PlayStation or multimedia PC software. Sony has sold about 500,000 Playstations in the UK, against 200,000 Saturns.

Early signs are that Sega is also being hit by the launch of Nintendo's state-of-the-art 64-bit machine, which has sold strongly in America and Japan. The Nintendo 64 is scheduled to be launched in the UK in early March.

Sega added that it would also be taking a charge to cover accumulated losses of \$215 million at its US subsidiary. Net parent profits are now forecast to be about two thirds smaller at ¥5.31 billion, compared with previous predictions of ¥16 billion.

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BUSINESS TODAY

FTSE 100	4091.0	(-1.5)
FTSE All share	2001.16	(+0.82)
Nikkei	12389.04	(+77.48)
Dow Jones	6657.06	(+10.39)
S&P Composite	758.88	(+1.08)

US DOLLAR		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(N/A)
Long Bond	93 3/4%	(N/A)
Yield	6.54%	

LENDING		
3-month Interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Life long gilt	110 1/2%	(110)

STOCKS		
New York	1.0918*	(1.0740)

\$		
London	1.6816	(1.6739)
DM	2.6308	(2.6044)
FF	8.8725	(8.7850)
SF	2.2918	(2.2430)
Yen	195.28	(191.38)
£ Index	95.6	(94.5)

US \$		
DM	1.5555*	(1.5533)
FF	1.3485*	(1.3435)
Yen	116.17*	(114.83)
£ Index	98.7	(98.4)

Tokyo close Yen	114.90	
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100 Yen		
Brent 15-day (Mar)	\$22.80	(\$22.00)

GOLD		
London close	\$389.55	(\$389.00)

* denotes midday trading price

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Laporte rounds off its revamp with £110m sale

By ERIC REGULY

LAPORTE, the chemicals group, yesterday largely completed its global restructuring by selling one of its main European businesses for £110 million. Jim Leng, chief executive, said that the company is now poised for expansion again.

Laporte sold the bulk of its European adhesives, sealants and coatings operations to Elf Atochem, the French energy group. The disposal of the businesses, which had an annual turnover of £100 million, will result in a goodwill write-off of £50 million and an exceptional gain of £28 million. The funds will be used to eliminate Laporte's debt.

Mr Leng said: "We wanted to put the house in good order before 1997. Now we've got an internationally competitive business with no debt."

The restructuring began in 1995, after a strategic review determined that the company was fighting on too many fronts in too many countries. The goal, implemented by a new executive team, was to focus the group on specialty chemicals and materials and



Jim Leng says that the restructured Laporte is again on the look-out for acquisitions

strive for top market positions in those.

The company, which had acquired more than 100 operating companies since 1980, has cut this number by a third. Diverse operations, with collective turnover of about £200 million, in South America — including a clay mine in

Peru — South-East Asia and North America were shed. The worldwide payroll has fallen by 15 per cent, to 6,000.

The effort, including the sale to Elf Atochem, has raised £170 million. Further funds will be raised if any of the remaining North American companies, including the adhesives and

sealant operations, are sold. Lazard Frères, the investment firm, is reviewing the North American portfolio.

Mr Leng said that Laporte is likely to expand by acquisition in 1997. Its requirements are companies with international presence and potential for market leadership, he said.

Go-ahead for Costain sell-offs

By ERIC REGULY

SHAREHOLDERS of Costain, the troubled construction group, yesterday approved the proposed sale of £52 million in assets.

The company's one-third stake in the Spitalfields development in London is to be bought by Metacorp of Malaysia for £23.4 million and the US coal business is going to Renco Inc of America for £28.6 million. The coal disposal had been expected since July when Lonrho pulled out of a deal.

Sir Christopher Benson, the chairman, who is stepping down along with Alan Lovell, chief executive, said that the sales would allow the company to concentrate on its core construction and engineering businesses.

A group of dissident shareholders picketed the extraordinary meeting with a mock "Costain closing down sale" auction.

They said they would attend another meeting on January 6, called to approve the issue or more shares. Costain shares were suspended at 46p last month.

Days lost to strikes highest since 1990

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITAIN is heading for its most strike-hit year since the end of the 1980s after a rash of industrial actions in the summer, new government figures will show. Whitehall officials expect the final count of days lost through strikes this year to be about 1.25 million — some three times higher than the total number of working days lost through strikes in 1995, when 415,000 days were lost.

Figures to be published by the Government's Office for National Statistics in the new year will confirm that Britain's strike record for 1996 will be the worst since 1990, when a long-running dispute in the engineering industry over shorter working hours pushed the overall number of working days lost through strikes up to 1.9 million.

While the increase in strike activity does not necessarily imply any long-term return of union militancy or strikes, the sharp rise in Britain's strike record shows that though dormant, union activity and poor industrial relations are

far from dead. Strikes this year in the Post Office, on the London Underground, in the fire service and in a range of regional rail companies have prompted Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, to issue a consultative green paper aimed at outlawing such strikes where they have a "disproportionate" effect. Ministers will use the suggested measures to have detailed proposals ready in time for the general election.

The total for 1996 will push the average for the 1990s up to some 1.5 million. Yet this still compares well with previous decades.

In the 1950s, Britain lost on average annually some 3.3 million working days through strikes, rising to 4.9 million in the 1960s and peaking at 20.2 million in the 1970s, affected heavily by the two miners' strikes of 1972 and 1974, and the winter of discontent of 1978-1979. Strikes then fell back in the 1980s to an annual average of 8.1 million working days lost.

Surprise fall in orders for US durables

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

ORDERS for costly US manufactured goods dropped unexpectedly in November because of weaker demand for computer components and communications equipment, the Commerce Department said yesterday.

New orders for all types of durable goods fell 1.6 per cent in November to a seasonally adjusted \$171.8 billion. It was the first decline in three months and in sharp contrast to the forecasts of Wall Street economists for a 0.1 per cent rise in orders, dispelling fears of a rise in interest rates.

The decrease in November orders came after a revised 0.5 per cent gain in October and a 4.5 per cent rise in September orders. Previously, the department said October orders had risen only 0.3 per cent.

The last time durable goods orders fell was in August, when they were down 3.6 per cent. Although November orders declined, shipments of finished goods were up 0.8 per cent to \$170.1 billion. There was a strong gain in shipments of electronic and electrical equipment and more shipments of commercial aircraft and parts.

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BUSINESS ROUNDUP

New tax rules 'unfair to the self-employed'

SOME of the new self-assessment tax rules are "unfair" and many will overpay, it was claimed yesterday. The Chartered Institute of Taxation said pitfalls in the law will penalise the self-employed. Self-assessment started in April and affects more than nine million people, including the self-employed and higher-rate taxpayers. The first self-assessment returns will be sent out in April 1997, although the self-employed will make their first payments in January.

The Institute claims that a "substantial proportion" of the four million self-employed affected will consistently overpay year after year because of their pension arrangements. Self-employed taxpayers who provide for their own pensions are allowed to "carry back" premiums paid to the previous tax year — but under the new system such arrangements will be ignored when interim payments for the following year are being calculated. An Inland Revenue spokeswoman said: "Self-assessment does not affect the amount of tax relief people can claim on their pension contributions."

Trade conditions tough

THERE is unlikely to be a significant recovery in the level of UK business failures in 1997, according to Gerling-Nemur, the credit insurer. The company forecasts that about 38,000 UK businesses will fail next year, a similar number to the expected total for 1996. In spite of signs of an economic recovery, Gerling-Nemur said that evidence gathered from the 600,000 UK businesses it had monitored suggested that trading conditions remained tough.

Mercedes pulls ahead

MERCEDES-BENZ, the German carmaker, yesterday predicted a sales boom for 1997 as it announced that sales this year would total DM77 billion, up from DM72 billion in 1995. For the first time, the company sold more than 640,000 cars, of which more than 370,000 were exported. In 1995, it sold 590,200 cars. The company said that its 1996 earnings would be above the previous year's total of DM2.75 billion.

GEI in steel disposal

GEI INTERNATIONAL, the processing and packaging machinery manufacturer, is selling its steel finishing and distribution businesses to The Timken Company for £5.1 million. The debtors, creditors and some stock of the businesses have been retained by the vendor, and a further £3 million net cash is expected after their realisation. The combined business was not profitable and had net assets of £6.39 million.

Gucci eyes new listing

GUCCI, the Italian luxury goods group, could consider a stock market listing on the Milan bourse in 1997, Domenico De Sole, the group's chairman and managing director, said. The company is already listed in New York and Amsterdam. In November, Gucci said that its sales were up by 81.2 per cent, to \$620.2 million, in the first nine months of its financial year to October 31 and were up by 69.1 per cent, to \$230.2 million, in the third quarter to the end of October.

Newman response

NEWMAN TONKS, the maker and distributor of architectural products, yesterday said that it will issue its formal defence against a £182.6 million takeover bid by FKI on January 6. The company rejected the 150p-a-share cash offer earlier this month, claiming that it undervalued the business. The shares closed at 154p yesterday. Newman Tonks has undergone extensive restructuring and more than a half of its business is now based outside the UK.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.20	2.04
Austria Sch	13.25	17.76
Belgium Fr	55.41	62.11
Canada \$	2.385	2.226
Cyprus Cyp	0.819	0.764
Denmark Kr	10.50	8.70
Finland Mk	8.28	7.88
France F	1.17	0.82
Germany Dm	2.75	2.54
Greece Dr	430	405
Hong Kong \$	15.87	12.57
Ireland £	1.20	1.00
Israel Sh	1.08	0.99
Japan Yen	171.75	161.50
Italy Lit	2853	2508
Malaysia M	255.50	180.30
Netherlands Gld	0.94	0.880
New Zealand \$	0.825	0.783
Norway Kr	11.35	10.55
Portugal Esc	272.50	254.00
S Africa Rd	14.40	7.90
Spain Ptas	228.00	213.00
Sweden Kr	12.08	11.08
Switzerland Fr	2.27	2.19
Turkey Lira	187250	170250
USA \$	1.770	1.640

THE SUNDAY TIMES

I wanted to work rather than pursue academic qualifications. I wanted to earn some money in the big wide world," says Gary Leigh, who left school after O-levels 17 years ago and is now a property multi-millionaire. But these days Leigh is a rarity...
Business, The Sunday Times tomorrow

Action man who thrives in a toy battlefield

Highlife breaks



WIDE-AWAKE 29

Make sure you have £100 in your account

WEEKEND MONEY

IN FOCUS 30

The banking sector into the spotlight



THE TIMES PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Gavin Lumsden on how trust managers have looked after your money in the past 12 months

Striving to be on top of the stocks

In spite of its recent nervousness, the UK stock market has been kinder than expected this year, with the FT-SE all-share index providing just less than 11 per cent growth to investors. The year started well after a bullish 1995, but markets became nervous in the spring and remained so until Alan Greenspan, chairman of the US Federal Reserve, said he was relaxed about the pace of economic growth.

At this, United States and United Kingdom markets raced ahead, barely changing their stride as the American public duly re-elected President Clinton, only to fall in recent weeks after another remark from Mr Greenspan that the markets were too high.

To get the most out of this uncertain behaviour private investors relying on stock market funds, such as unit trusts and investment trusts, had to pick managers who really knew their stocks.

Top of the unit trust stock-pickers was Mark Slater, manager of the Johnson Fry Slater Growth fund — started by his father, Jim Slater — who by December 16 had turned £1,000 invested in the new year into £1,421.23.

This beats hands down the average performance of the 1,606 unit trusts, which would have just added a paltry £7.11 to the £1,000 lump sum, according to HSW, the statistics provider. Even the average UK growth unit trust, of which the Slater fund is one, lifted the

sum by only £62.98. Mr Slater invests only in reasonably priced stocks with strong earnings growth prospects, healthy cash flow, and a rising share price.

This year's buoyant economic growth in the UK, combined with low inflation, he says, has been a good backdrop for this style. Significantly, the Johnson Fry Value fund, which seeks cheap shares, has done poorly in comparison this year.

Although not sector-focused, Mr Slater is partial to support services stocks, particularly companies such as Parity, Lynx Holdings and MMT Computing, which are exploit-

ing the "millennium factor". The predominance of smaller company funds in the top 20 belies the fact that after a good first quarter the tide has been running against them as institutional investors turned to blue chips for security. The Mercury Recovery fund has exploited small and large cap stocks. Previously focused on the smaller company sector, it ensured its place in the top ten when it raised its holdings of blue-chip stocks to 70 per cent halfway through the year.

However, not all large caps have prospered. John Wilton, investment manager at Standard Life, notes that utilities, traditionally good growth

managers against legal suits by their employees.

Elsewhere, investing money was a risky business. Certainly 1996 was the year you did not want to be in South Korea. All four funds dedicated to the country almost halved their investors' money this year and were at the bottom of the HSW tables for unit and investment trusts.

Ashok Shah, Far East portfolio manager at Old Mutual, says Korea has been hit by the strengthening of the US dollar, which has made its key semiconductor, steel and shipbuilding industries uncompetitive against Japan. Corporate earnings are down 40 per cent on last year, he says.

Japan needs all the good news it can get as its debt-burdened banks attempt to recover from the collapse of the property boom a few years ago. Investors in Japan unit trusts would have seen £216 of their £1,000 disappear this year. The only good news in the Far East has been Hong Kong, which has seen its Hang Seng index grow 28.4 per cent since January amid confidence that next year's handover to China will be good for business.

Currency worries in the form of a rise in sterling were particularly harmful to UK investors trying to eke some money out of emerging markets, says Radhika Ajmera of Aberdeen Trust. "There has been a huge disparity in performance at both stock and

Continued on page 28

Expert tips for 1997 — page 33

ing the "millennium factor". Many companies have computer systems that will read the year 2000 as 1900, which could wreak havoc on their administration and businesses if not corrected. "It is a market which is appearing out of nowhere," said Mr Slater.

Gervais Williams, manager of NatWest UK Smaller Companies unit trust, which came fourth overall, providing investors with £307 of growth in the year to date, also liked support services, but included pub and restaurant stocks such as Regent Inns and Wetherspoon and oil explorers and producers such as British Borneo and Cairn Energy as

stocks, have underperformed this year amid fears of regulatory intervention over boardroom excesses and a Labour windfall tax.

The switch to "quality" was also the pattern in the US, according to Charlie Park, manager of Hill Samuel US Smaller Companies, one of three such unit trusts that got in the top 20 on their performance in the first half of the year but have struggled since.

His favourite niche stocks have been Iron Mountain, a New York firm, whose document-storage business provides a wave of steady cash, and Executive Risk, a Connecticut company insuring se-



WINNERS AND LOSERS: THE BEST AND WORST PERFORMING TRUSTS OF 1996

TOP 10 UNIT TRUSTS OVERALL			TOP 10 INVESTMENT TRUSTS		
	£1,000 Investment	Rank		£1,000 Investment	Rank
Johnson Fry Slater Growth	1421.23	1	English National	2112.01	1
Jupiter European	1394.00	2	TR Technology	1807.91	2
Germans UK Smaller Companies	1307.30	3	Baring Emerging Europe	1730.42	3
NatWest UK Smaller Cos	1283.88	4	Central European Growth Fund	1540.88	4
HSBC Hong Kong Growth	1277.38	5	SR Pan-European	1511.98	5
GT Orient Acc	1265.20	6	Eximor Dual Cap	1490.26	6
Old Mutual European	1261.21	7	Promadonia	1449.71	7
Schroder Smaller Companies Inc	1241.64	8	Foreign & Colonial Enterprise	1441.68	8
Mercury Recovery	1230.68	9	WCT Cap	1441.67	9
Baring Europe Select	1229.57	10	Firstbry Worldwide Pharmacy	1427.05	10
BOTTOM 10 UNIT TRUSTS OVERALL			BOTTOM 10 INVESTMENT TRUSTS		
	£1,000 Investment	Rank		£1,000 Investment	Rank
Fidelity Japan Smaller Cos	715.34	1494	Fleming Indian	726.09	406
Govett MIS Hong Kong Bear	696.11	1495	Fidelity Japanese Values	679.63	407
Save & Prosper Southern Africa	683.38	1496	Lazard Birla India	670.81	408
Mercury WT Euro Equity Bear	670.74	1497	Perpetual Japanese	655.37	409
Govett MIS German Bear	648.45	1498	Fulcrum Cap	652.78	410
Govett MIS French Bear	647.91	1499	Schroder Japan Growth	652.52	411
Schroder Seoul	622.33	1490	INVECO Korea	598.47	412
Old Mutual Thailand Acc	602.18	1491	East German	570.18	413
Baring Korea	599.92	1492	Korea-Europe Fund	561.85	414
Save & Prosper Korea	530.56	1493	Schroder Korea Fund	550.83	415

£1,000 lump sum January 1-December 16. Source: HSW

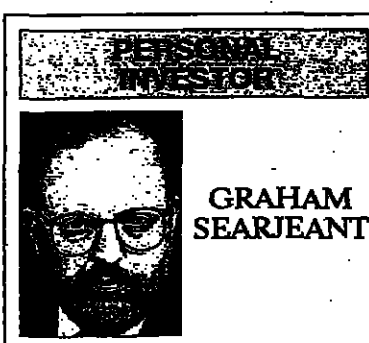
Try new year irresolution

New Year can be a tempting trap for all but the most disciplined investors. The temptation is to make your decisions for the year from the many suggestions offered by advisers, brokers and the press. New year share tips, though not always up to the standard of *Tempus*, are more likely to outperform the London market average than not. Predictions on markets and currencies can make your year since performance usually differs greatly between continents. Year-end tables of winners and losers among unit and investment trust show that choosing trusts can have almost as big an impact on investment results as choosing individual shares for a portfolio.

The trap many of us fall into is to make long-term decisions on short-term tests, or decisions that through indecision, conservatism or intolerance turn out to be long-term. Experience suggests that many of the best share tips, being based on emerging information not yet absorbed into market perception, come good within three months.

Currency and market trends are liable to last longer but may not be the right bricks to build a longer-term strategy. The Hong Kong market, for instance, looks an interesting speculation for the changeover year of 1997. But if you risk buying a unit trust such as HSBC Hong Kong Growth (top of its sector over five years according to research by Microcap) you should monitor it like an individual share, rather than lock it away as most investors prefer to do with trusts.

Core investments in unit and invest-



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

ment trusts should be chosen on a much longer view than 12 months. As argued here over the Morgan Grenfell affair, it is better to look beyond the latest suspect marvels to consistent above-average performers. Among specialist unit trust companies, Perpetual has a strong record in several sectors over five years, though not so good of late. Jupiter's trusts feature well among Microcap's long-term winners, but the company is now part of a German bank. The Britannia stable, though still patchy, is improving well and Fidelity rates highly in house markets.

If you follow the conventional wisdom, however, you would hardly be putting money in anything at the moment except, perhaps, a good emerging markets trust. When Alan Greenspan, chairman of the US Federal Reserve Board, intentionally knocked the world's stock markets a few weeks ago, one London analyst argued that everyone knew 1997 was going to be a

"down" year and it seemed to have started already. That proved premature. What "everyone knows" does not always happen, especially if what traders do says something else.

If shares were slightly ahead of trend in London and on Wall Street a year ago, they are further ahead of the game now, after big gains in the US and another above-average year in London. A 5-10 per cent correction on Wall Street, if it comes, will hit London more than most other markets. Apart from that, however, our attention is bound to centre on the election. Big fund managers expect a Labour victory and are not dismayed by the prospect. But uncertainty will in any case put many people's buying decisions off.

Should Labour win, it will be under double pressure to show its anti-inflationary monetary credentials and to grasp the nettle on borrowing that Tories have recently brushed with kid gloves. If Labour's Gordon Brown put base rates up slightly and stayed his Budget till November, shares and gilt-edged should react positively. But the drive to be active in the first hundred days is overwhelming these days. Investors would have to watch for a bigger utility levy than spin-doctors first put about and hidden taxes on business, investors or pension funds. Some of the answers will become easier to read over the next few weeks. Until then, investors have no reason to show their hand either, except to make sure their portfolio is not dominated by utilities.

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Caroline Merrell looks at the European experience

No place to put your money



Disenchantment: while Sir James Goldsmith made political mileage from concern over Europe, 160,000 people who invested in trusts lost out financially

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TM 02/12/96

Europe was a banana skin for the Government in 1996. It was also a headache for investors.

A turbulent year in the European trust sector was marked by the scandal surrounding the Morgan Grenfell European funds, including MG European Growth, a widely recommended and apparently top-performing unit trust from a blue-blooded City house.

These events coincided with the break-up of the giant Kleinwort Benson European Privatisation Investment Trust (Kepit) whose performance had always failed to live up to its launch promises. As the year closed, a £220 million MG compensation package was announced. But the combination of these two events left 160,000 investors disenchanted with the European dream.

Elsewhere performance was mixed. For example, the top performing trust in the sector, Jupiter European, rose by 35 per cent over the year and the second best performing trust, the Old Mutual European, rose by 28 per cent. The average unit trust rose by around 9 per cent, while the

bottom performing, Old Mutual Swiss Equities, fell by nearly 10 per cent.

However, these performances were overshadowed by events at the end of the summer when Morgan Grenfell, owned by Deutsche Bank, Germany's largest bank, was forced to suspend three funds, valued together at £1.4 billion, because Peter Young, the investment manager, had built up substantial holdings in small unquoted Scandinavian companies.

The proportion of the fund that had been invested in unquoted stocks had risen above the 10 per cent limit imposed by the Securities and Investments Board, the City watchdog. When the funds were suspended, the level of unquoted stock was revealed to have risen to nearly 30 per cent, or almost £700 million.

When the funds reopened for trading two days after they were suspended, investors queued up to sell their holdings, disinvesting to the tune of £180 million. Morgan Grenfell had to contribute £180 million to support the fund. Deutsche Bank agreed to step in and compensate the investors for any "losses that had resulted from the irregularities".

Independent financial advisers had been putting millions of pounds of their clients' money into this fund. Much came at the end of the tax year, as advisers encouraged investors to use up their annual personal equity plan allowance to diversify into Europe.

The problems with the two funds, though entirely different in their nature, have cast a pall over investment in Europe. Kleinwort Benson's problems stemmed from the fact that it took about £500 million at launch.

The trust had a very narrow investment criteria, which meant that it could only buy shares in privatised European companies. It was unable to get enough of the right quality stock. It immediately fell to a big discount (that is, its share price was below its net asset value), a gap which Kleinwort Benson was unable to close. Eventually, the board of the trust decided that the only option was to restructure. It managed to fend off a

£500 million hostile bid from Touche Renmant European Growth Trust (Treg) and instead opted to offer investors a choice of cash or an investment in an equivalent M&G or Kleinwort fund. The vast majority — 80 per cent of 70,000 investors, chose to liquidate their holdings.

Ian Millward, of Chase de Vere, said: "The Morgan Grenfell situation was far more damaging to the unit trust industry than Kepit. Morgan Grenfell has gone a long way towards trying to mend the damage." He said it was unfortunate that Kepit had hit the problems it had, because some of the more lucrative European privatisation, such as Deutsche Telekom, were beginning to get on the road. The shares shot to a premium.

For those who have not been put off investing in Europe, Mr Millward recommends funds from Credit Suisse and Fidelity. For example, the Credit Suisse European has risen 13 per cent over the year, while Fidelity has a range of four European funds that have risen between 30 and 50 per cent over the past three years.

Managers strive to be on top

Continued from page 27

country level in emerging markets this year," she says.

While South Africa fell 25 per cent in dollar terms as the rand collapsed, Hungary and Russia doubled in value. In Latin America, Brazil was best performer, with a 50 per cent rise in local terms.

In spite of the furore this year over the Kleinwort European Privatisation Investment Trust, which was converted into a unit trust after several years of poor performance, many investment trusts have proved more profitable than their unit trust counterparts. Ten have returned more than the Johnson Fry Slater Growth unit trust in spite of the discounts of share prices to net asset value. As with the unit trusts, investment trusts focusing on smaller companies, Europe, or specialist areas such as technology and pharmacy, have done the best.

English National, the top performing investment trust, has returned a whopping £2.112 on the £1,000 January investment. However, it is something of an anomaly, its share price having benefited from a bid move by Joe Lewis, a Bahaman businessman, earlier this year and not from any increase in net asset value.

However, this is not the case for second-placed TR Technology, which

grew the £1,000 into £1,807.91 by December 16. James de Saumarez, retail managing director of Henderson Investors, which manages the fund, says investment trusts benefit from their ability to borrow money to take advantage of rising markets — known as gearing — something unit trusts cannot do.

Investment trusts also enable investors to get a bargain in a way that unit trusts cannot. As separately quoted companies, investment trusts issue shares, the value of which can rise and fall according to market sentiment.

That sentiment is not always linked to how a trust is actually performing. A trust that is diligently growing its net asset value can see its share price fall. This is called a discount and can be a good time to buy if you think that the price will rise later.

Many analysts believe Invesco Enterprise, an investment trust focusing on smaller companies, is such a bargain. It used to be called the Lazard Smaller Companies and is languishing at a huge 25 per cent discount to its net asset value after several years of underperformance under Lazard's. Andy Crossley, its new manager, is a respected smaller companies fund manager and many believe investors could benefit from a "double whammy" as its share price rises and small companies recover.

Bonds — government debt that pays guaranteed interest and repayment of

capital, have also had a mixed year. Bonds tend to act as a mirror image of equities, doing well when stock markets do badly, and usually run scared at the first whiff of inflation.

True to form, US bonds returned a meagre 2.8 per cent to investors as the bull run in US equities stoked fears that the economy would overheat and cause inflation. In spite of similar inflationary pressures in the UK, gilts, performed surprisingly well, with a 6.5 per cent return to investors.

However, the best returns for bond investors were in Europe, particularly in Italy and Spain where total returns for the year surpassed 20 per cent as prices rocketed. Robert Macintyre, of Whittingdale, the gilt expert, said prices rose as Italy and Spain introduced tight budgets in an attempt to meet the Maastricht criteria for a single European currency, forcing yields on their bonds down to German levels.

The best international fixed-interest funds in the 12 months to November were Baring Global and Barclays Unicorn European Bond. According to Miroslav these added £32 and £68 to the £1,000 investment respectively. The best UK and gilt fixed interest funds were both from Scottish fund managers. Abraxas Fixed Interest achieved £1.139 while Allied Dunbar Convertible and Gilts provided £1.118.

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New pension, the same old danger

In the dyspeptic days after Christmas, contemplating pensions is as appealing as the prospect of another mince pie. But thousands of employees must fix their minds upon this subject, however unappetizing. For in the months to come they may be forced to make complex decisions that could mean the difference between shandy or champagne Christmas in their old age.

Companies looking to cut the cost of running pension schemes will, in 1997, be increasingly turning to group personal pensions, replacing a traditional general fund with a series of individual plans. In theory, employees should enjoy all the benefits of independence, being able, for example, to pack up their plans as they move from job to job. But the reality can be very different.

The value of any personal pen-



ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

sion largely depends how much cash is invested and how much disappears into the pockets of the middlemen arranging the deal. If large initial deductions are made, then there will be sizeable penalties for those who switch employers in early years, and poorer payouts for those who stay the course.

Anyone offered the option of a group personal pension should ask who is paying the adviser setting up the fund. If you learn that large

amounts will be disappearing in insurance company charges and commissions, then you might be better off arranging your own plan. If answers to this first question prove evasive, then look at the projection for the value of your plan at the end of the first year. If the figure is less than you will have paid in, point out that other firms of advisers come much cheaper.

The life insurance industry is said to consider the GPP as a

prime sales opportunity for 1997. This should put anyone on his or her guard. Why should an industry which has yet to resolve one scandal involving personal pensions show itself to be any more honourable in future sales of the same investment?

Bond concern

THE pitfalls of guaranteed bonds, where the return may not be as munificent as the promises in the large and small print, have long been highlighted by *Weekend Money*. And this weekend the Institute of Actuaries has voiced its concern that "the chances of getting lower payouts are much higher than might be expected". The actuaries should now cooperate with City watchdogs to put an end to misleading promises before more investors are deluded.

Caroline Merrell and Sara McConnell with a last-minute warning on flotations

Join the wide-awake club

Millions of members of the big building societies set to float or be taken over in 1997 have just two days to top their accounts up to £100, or lose out on their long awaited free shares or cash. Members of the Halifax, Bristol & West, Northern Rock and the Woolwich must have this amount in their accounts by December 31, 1996, to qualify to vote and to receive their bonus.

There are fears that thousands will lose out because they have depleted their accounts in the spending frenzy of Christmas and New Year sales. The societies say that

cheques paid on Tuesday December 31 will be enough to ensure that savers do not lose out on the windfall. If the cheques subsequently bounce, then the savers will forego their bonuses.

If savers do not top up their accounts, then they will suffer the same fate as about 100,000 savers with the Alliance & Leicester who failed to heed warnings from the society and did not replenish their accounts by the deadline of October 14.

It is estimated that they have together lost out to the tune of £1 million. All the societies have been contacting their

members to encourage them to top up their accounts. About 17,000 people have now acted to top up their accounts at the Bristol & West alone.

Each of the building society conversion schemes is subtly different. For instance, in order to qualify for the basic distribution of shares, Halifax members had to have £100 in their accounts on November 25, 1994, and £100 at the end of this year.

As part of its £10 billion conversion, the Halifax is also offering an additional variable share distribution for those with more than £1,000 invested. These extra shares will be

based on the lower of two balances between November 25, 1994 and the date of the special general meeting in February.

The Woolwich's 2.9 million members who had £100 in their accounts on December 31, 1996 will only qualify for the basic payout if they also had £100 in their account at midnight on December 31, 1995.

Under the Woolwich's scheme, investors who have been with the society for more than two years and who have between £1,000 and £50,000 in their accounts will qualify for a larger payout, based on the

lower of two balances between December 31, 1995 and the sgm in February.

Only those one million Northern Rock members who had £50 in their accounts on April 2 this year, and who also have £100 at the end of this year will qualify for the share distribution.

The rules are different again at the B&W, where savers who had an account with the society at the end of 1994 and subsequently had £100 with the society on April 15 this year will benefit from a cash bonus in the Bank of Ireland takeover, providing they have £100 in their accounts at December 31.

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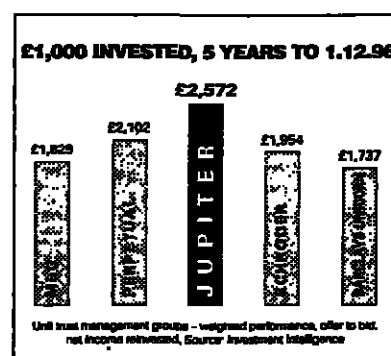
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The way we were: the banking sector has come a long way since the days when huge staffs balanced ledgers by hand

UK retail banks are enjoying themselves. Bad debt is under control and consumer borrowing, one of the most lucrative sources of revenue, is growing as the economic recovery strengthens. Expected interest rate rises and a revival in the housing market also mean mortgage lending profit margins can be increased.

Across the sector analysts are expecting dividend growth of 15 per cent to 20 per cent over the next two years, compared with 8 per cent to 10 per cent dividend growth for the rest of the market. Peter Toeman, banking analyst at ABN Amro Hoare Govett, said: "Lending growth is running at about 10 per cent per annum, driven by consumer credit which has the biggest profit margins."

For the first time banks are managing to increase profitability while reducing staff numbers, thanks to the increased efficiency of electronic banking. Last month Royal Bank of Scotland reported healthy pre-tax profits of £695 million for the year to September 30, 15 per cent higher than the year before. This was in spite of Direct Line, its direct insurance and financial services subsidiary, suffering a slump in its profits contribution to £26.5 million, against £112 million last year.

John Shelley, director of UK larger companies at Abtrust, the fund manager with £3 billion under management, said:



SECTOR IN FOCUS

"We think the prospects for the UK retail bank sector are good. We particularly like the Asian banks, HSBC and Standard Chartered, which are both undervalued and yet perfectly placed in the fastest growing consumer finance markets of the world. Standard Chartered is also a likely bid target. Our favourite UK bank is Lloyds TSB which has demonstrated strong commitment to enhancing shareholder value."

Mr Shelley believes next year's building society flotations, dominated by the Halifax Building Society which is expected to raise at least £10 billion, will attract heavy US investment, as the UK bank sector has lagged behind its strongly-performing US counterpart.

Lloyds TSB's merger with TSB is expected to produce cost savings of at

least £350 million. Its widely-admired purchase of Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society has been emulated by Abbey National, which recently completed its takeover of National & Provincial. And Royal Bank's chief executive, George Mathewson, has made no secret of his interest in buying a building society.

The high profit margins associated with retail banking are attracting new entrants, such as Tesco, J Sainsbury, and Safeway. And BAT, the tobacco and financial services giant which owns insurance companies Allied Dunbar and Eagle Star is also rumoured to be sizing up the market.

But there are concerns that banks, not known for their far-sightedness, may relax their lending criteria to capitalise on consumer and corporate demand. This could let the bad debt genie out of the bottle again and lead to a slump in profits. In 1991, when the recession was at its most severe, bad debt accounted for 2.5 per cent of total lending. It is now about 0.5 per cent.

Hoare Govett's Peter Toeman also believes the benign outlook for banks is by and large already reflected in their share prices. Investors looking for a short-term punt should look to other sectors. Over the medium-term, however — three to five years, say — the sector does remain attractive.

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Tessa
show a
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yield

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Sarah McConnell reports on how the second crop of Tesses has fared

New-crop Tesses show a falling yield

Next week the second crop of tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tesses), worth an estimated £2 billion, will mature. Anyone who has invested the maximum £9,000 over the past five years will be looking at an average lump sum of £11,491.73. The lucky ones who invested with the top-performing Chesham Building Society will get £11,953.65. At the other end of the scale, investors with the Co-operative Bank will get just £10,839.82.

You may want to take the money and run. But if you want to open another Tessa, you will have a nasty shock. Not only are rates up to 7 per cent lower than when you invested in 1992, but Tesses have become complicated. You have a choice of variable rates, fixed rates, accounts linked to the FT-SE 100 index and escalator Tesses, where the rate is guaranteed to rise each year by a set amount.

Many savers were bruised by their experience with variable-rate Tesses, the rates of which had halved from 14 to 7 per cent over five years. A number of banks and building societies rushed in with offers of fixed rates over five years, to tempt people with the promise of security in new Tesses. There was a good response. At Abbey National, 75 per cent of savers putting money into second-generation Tesses last year opted for the Abbey's 7 per cent fixed rate rather than its 6.6 per cent variable rate.

But now advisers question the wisdom of locking into a fixed rate for five years. Rates are starting to rise after another year of freefall, and five years is a long time to be trapped in an uncompetitive fixed rate. James Higgins, of Chamberlain de Broe, the independent financial adviser, said: "Go for a variable rate. Rates are cyc-

lical, and anyone who hit the bullet last year and went for a variable rate should see rates rise."

Vicki Burn, deputy editor of *Moneyfacts*, said: "I would not go for a fixed rate with an election in the offing and rising base rates." At first sight, fixed rates look tempting. A telephone survey of rates by *The Times* showed that variable-rate first and second-generation Tesses from all the main providers have fallen across the year, in some cases by significantly more than the 0.85 per cent fall in base rates. Some rates are starting to turn up again but only slightly.

All the following assume that savers have invested the maximum £9,000 over five years. Those still on their first Tessa at the Alliance & Leicester, for example, would have seen their variable rate fall over the year from 6.5 to 5.25 per cent now. Savers whose Tesses mature this year will be offered a new Tessa at a variable rate of 6.35 per cent, substantially lower than the 7.25 per cent offered to savers with accounts maturing this time last year.

Bardays, traditionally a poor performer in the Tessa stakes, has cut its rate on first-generation Tesses from 6.5 per cent to 5.75 per cent. This will rise to 6 per cent in the new year. The bank redeems itself slightly by offering a 6.25 per cent variable rate on its follow-up account to maturing Tessa savers this year. The Halifax, the largest society, was paying 6.7 per cent on its Tessa 1 at the beginning of January and is now paying 6.05 per cent. But both these rates include a maturity bonus. Without the bonus they fall to 5.9 and 5.45 per cent. Like the A&L, savers whose accounts



Another harvest safely in: like wheatfields, some Tesses have cropped heavily while others barely paid their way

mature this year are offered a minimally better variable rate on Tessa 2, of 6.24 per cent including bonus.

But some institutions, particularly banks, seem to be keen to add insult to injury to savers with maturing Tesses. At Lloyds, Tessa 1 was paying 6.75 per cent in January this year and is now paying 6.25 per cent. The follow-up Tessa is paying the same, hardly an incentive to stay loyal. TSB, now part of Lloyds, has adopted the same strategy. According to *Moneyfacts*, the best variable rate on offer for those with maturing Tesses is from the National Counties Building Society, at 7.2 per cent. The

minimum investment is £9,000. West Bromwich is paying 7 per cent on a minimum of £250. The C&G and Birmingham Midshires are also paying 7 per cent, on minimum investments of £9,000 and £1,000.

The real action, for the financial institutions at least, is on the fixed-rate side. Rising interest rates mean some institutions have refinanced fixed-rate deals to give savers better rates. According to *Moneyfacts*, the savings guide, the West Bromwich Building Society and NatWest Bank are best buys on the fixed-rate side, paying a fixed rate of 7.45 per cent on minimum balances of £3,000 and

£5,500 respectively. The Yorkshire Bank is paying 7.3 per cent on £9,000.

Given the poor record of Tessa providers in offering good variable rates, many savers will be tempted towards a fixed rate. Last time round, there were almost no fixed rates as interest rates were too high to make the offer of a fixed rate profitable. But what looks a good rate now may not be if rates rise over the next five years.

Mark Dampier, of Churchill Investments, the independent financial adviser, said: "It won't take much for variable rates to rise above fixed rates. There isn't that much difference."

Projected maturity values of variable rate Tesses at January 1, 1997, assuming that the maximum investment was made on opening (January 1, 1992) and maximum top-ups made on each anniversary.

LARGER INSTITUTIONS

Abbey National	£11,478.94
Alliance & Leicester BS	£11,373.48
Bank of Scotland	£11,082.75
Bank	£11,234.12
Birmingham Midshires BS	£11,311.29
Bradford & Bingley BS (High Return)	£11,338.31
Bristol & West BS (Bonus)	£11,543.00
Britannia BS	£11,513.33
Cheltenham BS	£11,452.63
Chesham & Gloucester	£11,953.65
Co-operative Bank	£10,839.82
Coutts & Co	£11,298.25
First Direct	£11,217.32
Halifax BS	£11,588.09
Leeds & Holbeck BS	£11,432.77
Lloyds Bank	£11,223.54
Lloyds Bank (Option)	£11,279.73
Midland Bank	£11,008.65
National Counties BS	£11,744.38
NatWest Bank	£11,441.83
Northern Rock BS	£11,325.00
Norwich & Peterborough BS	£11,419.62
Portman BS	£11,439.22
Robert Fleming/S&P	£11,459.01
Royal Bank of Scotland	£11,136.08
Shipton BS	£11,477.65
Stodd & Swindon BS	£11,422.32
Sun Banking Corporation	£11,545.33
TSB	£11,613.28
West Bromwich BS	£11,508.96
Woolwich BS	£11,526.93
Yorkshire Bank	£11,275.23
Yorkshire BS	£11,546.68

TOP MATURING TESSAS

Rank/Company	Value
1) Chesham BS	£11,953.65
2) Henley Economic BS	£11,917.62
3) Julian Hodge Bank	£11,804.37
4) Allied Trust Bank (now Investec)	£11,779.38
5) Buckinghamshire BS	£11,774.00
6) Melton Monetary BS	£11,753.94
7) National Counties BS	£11,744.38
8) Tipton & Cooley BS	£11,729.77
9) Dunfermline BS	£11,726.61
10) Vero BS	£11,710.73
11) Cheshire BS	£11,705.30
12) Monmouthshire BS	£11,701.81
13) Exeter Bank	£11,681.94
14) Leopold Joseph & Sons	£11,683.78
15) Holmesdale BS	£11,678.04

BOTTOM MATURING TESSAS

Rank/Company	Value
76) Lloyds Bank (Option)	£11,279.73
77) Yorkshire Bank	£11,275.23
78) Barclays Bank	£11,234.12
79) Ulster Bank (NI)	£11,228.44
80) Lloyds Bank	£11,223.54
81) First Direct	£11,217.32
82) Leask United BS	£11,186.00
83) Robert Fleming/S&P	£11,136.08
84) Clydesdale Bank	£11,100.82
85) Bank of Scotland	£11,082.75
86) Northern Bank (NI)	£11,083.00
87) Cater Allen Bank	£11,064.98
88) Bank of Ireland (NI)	£11,022.17
89) Midland Bank	£11,008.65
90) Co-operative Bank	£10,839.82

Source: Moneyfacts

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Seven financial areas — banking, insurance, mortgages, investments, financial advice, pensions and tax — are clearly explained and a telephone number is provided to ask for further information leaflets giving independent advice.

Free copies of *Wheel of Fortune* can be obtained from the Unit Trust Investment Service on 0181 207 1361 or by writing to UTIS, 65 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6TD.

THE forthcoming flotation of building societies and the Norwich Union will affect 20 million people, many of whom will be holding share investments for the first time. The Share Centre has produced an information pack to guide investors through every aspect of the demutualisation process, explaining the possible tax implications and opportunities for shareholders.

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GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME

Rates as at December 24, 1996

Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year		
5,000	Financial Assur	5.30
10,000	Premium Life	5.50
20,000	Premium Life	5.70
50,000	Premium Life	5.80
2 Years		
1,000	Premium Life	5.15
10,000	Premium Life	5.95
20,000	Premium Life	6.10
50,000	Premium Life	6.15
3 Years		
1,000	Premium Life	5.50
10,000	Premium Life	6.20
20,000	Premium Life	6.35
50,000	Premium Life	6.35
4 Years		
1,000	Premium Life	5.85
3,000	ITF London & Edin	6.35
5 Years		
1,000	Premium Life	5.90
3,000	ITF London & Edin	6.45

Source: Charitable of Bond 0171-434 4222. Net rates, income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

SAVERS' BEST BUYS

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Teachers' BS 01202 887171	Instant	£500	4.80	Y/Y
Scarborough BS 0800 590578	Instant	£5,000	5.70	Y/Y
Bristol & West BS 0800 901108	Instant	£10,000	6.00	Y/Y
Bristol & West BS 0800 901108	Instant	£25,000	6.05	Y/Y

NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Cheltenham & Glos 0800 717505	Direct 30	day p	£100	5.50	Y/Y
First National BS 01232 314050	High Yield	30 day	£25,000	6.45	Y/Y
Leopold Jos & Sons 0171 588 2323	40 Day Notice	30 day	£10,000	6.22	Y/Y
Leeds & Holbeck BS 0113 225 7777	Postal Bonus	30.4.58p	£10,000	7.00	OM

FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	of term	Deposit	Rate	paid
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	Fixed	5 year	£8,575	7.50	F/Y
NatWest Bank 0800 200400	Fixed	5 year	£5,000	7.45	F/Y
Birmingham Midshires 0645 720721	infin Bester	5 year	£1,000	7.00	Y/Y
West Bromwich BS 0800 143688		5 year	£250	7.00	Y/Y

CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS				
CREDIT CARDS	Card type	Interest per month	APR%	Fee per annum
Co-operative Bank 0800 108000	Advantage Visa	0.64%NC	7.90%N	NIL
Capital One Bank 0800 668000	Visa	0.797%N	9.90%N	NIL
Robert Fleming/SAP 0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	0.917%N	11.90%	NIL

PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £3,000 for 3yrs with insurance	no insurance
Northern Rock BS 0345 421421	12.90%N	£112.66	£102.69
RBS Direct 0800 121215	14.00%N	£114.78	£101.45
Direct Line 0141 248 9966	14.80%N	£114.25	£102.48

N/C = no interest free period, E = Available to comprehensive motor insurance policy holders over 22 years, F = Fixed Rate (all other rates variable), H = Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged, N = Introductory rate for a limited period, OM = interest paid on maturity, P = By Post only

* RATES SHOWING ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING

Source: Moneyfacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01682 500 677)

Fixed Rate	Gross coupon	Buying price	Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase
Birmingham Midshires	9.375%	101.59	9.220	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley	11.625%	123.91	9.582	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley	13.000%	132.29	9.584	100.13	10,000
Bristol & West	13.375%	142.93	9.378	100.34	1,000
Britannia	13.000%	138.83	9.384	100.42	1,000
Coventry	12.125%	130.89	9.230	100.75	1,000
First National	11.750%	122.91	9.560	100.25	10,000
Halifax	12.000%	127.10	9.570	100.25	1,000
Halifax	12.000%	131.22	9.577	100.28	50,000
Halifax	13.625%	149.81	9.095	100.00	50,000
Leeds & Holbeck	13.375%	144.75	9.240	100.23	1,000
Newcastle	10.750%	117.58	9.123	100.32	1,000
NorthEast	12.625%	137.41	9.152	100.45	1,000
Northern Rock	12.625%	138.41	9.056	100.14	1,000
Skipton	12.875%	139.19	9.250	100.48	1,000

Floating Rate	Gross coupon	Buying price	Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase
Cheshire (28/09/97/03/8) 415835		107.68	100.00	1,000	
First Nat (20/08-20/03) 8487505		101.63	100.00	1,000	

PBS = Permanent Interest-bearing Shares
Source: ABN AMRO Home Loans — 0171 801 0101

Share in Focus	Yorkshire Electricity	A Bid Prospect
100	100	100
200	200	200
300	300	300
400	400	400
500	500	500
600	600	600
700	700	700
800	800	800
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Share in Focus	Yorkshire Electricity	A Bid Prospect
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Share in Focus	Yorkshire Electricity	A Bid Prospect
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Share in Focus	Yorkshire Electricity	A Bid Prospect
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Share in Focus	Yorkshire Electricity	A Bid Prospect
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Share in Focus	Yorkshire Electricity	A Bid Prospect
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Share in Focus	Yorkshire Electricity	A Bid Prospect
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Share in Focus	Yorkshire Electricity	A Bid Prospect
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Share in Focus	Yorkshire Electricity	A Bid Prospect
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Share in Focus	Yorkshire Electricity	A Bid Prospect
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200	200	200
300	300	300
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Share in Focus	197.30	165.30	0 - 0.30	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
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The professionals pick their top trusts for the coming year

All the experts Weekend Money called are tipping UK smaller companies, Europe and the Far East as the best sectors to find next year's star funds. For the more experienced, there are several "bargain" investment trusts with their shares at a discount.

IAN MILLWARD, of Chase de Vere, said: "The UK market is high and people are waiting for a fall. If the timing worries you, taking up Henderson Investors' phase-in facility on its Peps could be a good idea. This will invest a £2,000 lump sum over three, six or 12 months. Schroder UK Enterprise, run by Jim Cox, an aggressively managed fund focusing on 30-40 stocks is a good fund. Europe is a good market to diversify into. It is mature like the UK, but 12-18 months behind the UK in economic cycle, and should have room for growth, especially with more integration. Two good managers are Fidelity and Jupiter. The Far East, excluding Japan, is not for the cautious, being volatile but with strong growth potential." Try Schroders Pacific Growth.

ANDREW JONES, of the David Aaron Partnership, said: "If Wall Street does have a 5 per cent correction, the UK is likely to follow and smaller and medium stocks will offer the best protection. Mercury Recovery is aggressively managed and has the ability to switch between blue chips and small stocks. With smaller companies I also like to go for smaller funds - big funds have to hold so many stocks they can rarely do anything interesting. River & Mercantile First Growth has only £10 million of assets but is managed by Jeremy Lang, who is very good at finding unexpected earnings growth."

MIKE OWEN, of Plan Invest, said: "Once again, 1996 was the year of the blue chip. Next year could be different. Europe and South-East Asia are useful if you have a UK-based portfolio." He likes Credit Suisse Smaller Companies, Invesco European and GT Orient "has done well and with up to half of its portfolio in Hong Kong and China is in the right place to benefit from the end of colonial rule next year."

CLIVE SCOTT-HOPKINS, of Towry Law, tipped Barings Europe Select and Perpetual Asian Smaller Markets.

TIM COCKERILL, of Whitechurch Securities, said: "I look to two funds in the UK. GT Income, run by Nick Train, has had lots of attention, but I expect him to stay in the first quartile even if the performance falls off. Or, less well known, but among the top for 10 years, Lazards UK Income, yields 5 per cent under Tim Russell."

GRAHAM HOOPER, of Chase de Vere, said: "HTR Witan is a good general international fund with a wide spread of markets standing at a 14 per cent discount. More popular now, though it invests in volatile areas, is Templeton Emerging Markets, run by Mark Mobius."

MARK FLAWN THOMAS, of Chartfield, said: "Invesco Enterprise investment trust invests in UK smaller companies, a sector which has got left behind recently and is due to recover. Investors can get a double whammy from this fund because it is standing at a 25 per cent discount because Lazards, the previous manager, didn't do a good job until the end. Watch out for Mercury European Privatisation Investment Trust (Mepit). SBC Warburg has a £100 million stake and may put pressure on Mercury to follow Kleinwort Benson's example and unitise. This would immediately give a 14 per cent uplift."

TIM COCKERILL said: "Prolific Income Trust. Manager Tim Gregory is very good at finding success stories early like RJB and Spirax Sarco. It is now at a small premium and yields 4 per cent."

CLIVE SCOTT-HOPKINS said: "My favourite is Scottish Eastern, run by Martin Currie. It is a general international trust with a bias to the Far East. It is also at a 15 per cent discount. For a bit of a punt try Fleming Chinese, which is at a 20 per cent discount but with quite a health warning. It is better to have international spread than to try to be clever and to go for a single country as you can come unstuck." Investment or unit trusts? Don't just seek discounts. Tim Cockerill said: "Ask yourself why is it at a discount? Look at the net asset value performance, maybe there is something buried in the portfolio. Unit trusts are best for the first time investor. If the market goes up, your unit goes up, which may not happen in an investment trust if market sentiment is against it - you're just holding a share - you need a buyer."

GAVIN LUMSDEN

Caroline Merrell examines the implications of the euro for investors

Confused by single currency?

The months of debate about the single currency reached a climax earlier this month with the unveiling of the new euro. However, these newly printed notes will, for the time being, remain only symbolic. The present UK Government is taking a "wait-and-see" attitude to the single currency - it prefers to monitor how the other European nations fare before deciding on whether to participate.

The debate about Europe, the single currency and the implications for the British economy is a divisive topic. No clear consensus exists about whether it is better to join, stay out with the option of joining later or stay out completely. Labour is seemingly more favourably inclined towards Europe and has pledged to hold a referendum on the subject.

From the corridors of power, investors have no clear idea of the implications of joining or staying out of the single currency. However, the consequences could be more wide-reaching for unit and investment trusts than previously considered.

Q What happens if we stay out of the single currency?

A Strangely enough, some City experts believe that staying out of the single currency will mean very little change. The Government has managed to win assurances from Europe that there will be no trade sanctions if the UK does not join. Sterling will simply have to pit its wits against the euro. The pound is now climbing towards the level it was when the UK's membership of the exchange-rate mechanism was suspended, which makes exports dearer and imports cheaper.

Q What effect will the single currency have on gilts?

A Many unit trusts, pensions and insurance bonds invest heavily in government gilt-edged stocks, the yields of which are closely linked to movements in interest rates and inflation.

The current yield on UK government securities stands at a little more than 7 per cent. Unusually, the yields for longer-dated gilts - those with ten years or more to run - are similar to those with a shorter life of five years.

Joining the single currency would immediately bring some convergence with yields offered on German government bonds, the strongest member of the single currency - yields on these currently range from 4.4 per cent to 6.49 per cent. There could be a sharp rise in the price of UK gilts because of this difference.



The fact that bonds across Europe would be priced in the same currency would considerably reduce the risk of fluctuations caused by sterling's strength or weakness against a particular currency. For instance, at the moment, the strength of sterling against the mark means that any gains made in the German market will be wiped out by the exchange rate. Some funds guard against this through a process known as hedging. If the Government keeps the UK out of the single currency then

investing in the European bond market will continue to be subject to currency risk.

Q What effect will the single currency have on investing in European stocks?

A Again, a single European currency will mean that UK investors will be immune from the losses caused by the sudden surges in sterling against the other currencies in the European Union. However, it is equally possible for gains

to be made in currency movements - a single currency would prevent this.

Q What will be the knock-on effects of the move towards the single currency?

A Many of the other European countries have a long way to go before they are strong enough economically to join the single currency. Many are embarking on privatisation programmes to raise capital to pay off their debts.

Investors may be able to benefit from the sell-offs. For example, the recent privatisation of Deutsche Telekom followed a similar pattern to those of UK privatisations. And while it was almost impossible for UK investors to get stock directly, many will have benefited from investing in unit trusts and investment trusts that bid for the shares. The costs of fund management could also go down because it will no longer be necessary to hedge funds against currency fluctuations.

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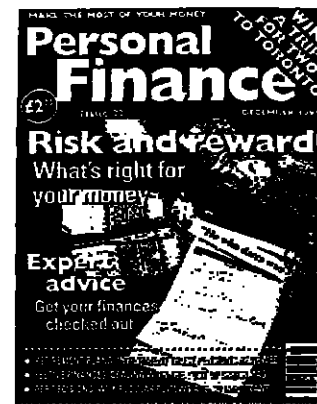
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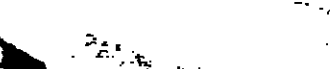
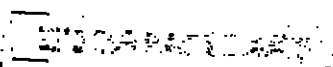
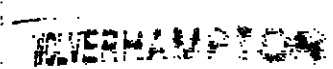
[illegible]

Equities mark time

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

[illegible][illegible]

1996 Low Company Price +/- % P/E					1996 Low Company Price +/- % P/E				
175	38 Johnson Fy	134	-	37.53	527	258 Union Carbide	199	+	24.15
176	328 Liberty Int	410	+	41.23	528	199VAC	198	+	3.12
177	1017 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	529	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
178	1020 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	530	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
179	1021 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	531	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
180	1022 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	532	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
181	1023 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	533	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
182	1024 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	534	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
183	1025 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	535	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
184	1026 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	536	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
185	1027 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	537	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
186	1028 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	538	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
187	1029 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	539	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
188	1030 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	540	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
189	1031 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	541	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
190	1032 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	542	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
191	1033 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	543	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
192	1034 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	544	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
193	1035 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	545	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
194	1036 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	546	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
195	1037 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	547	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
196	1038 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	548	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
197	1039 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	549	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
198	1040 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	550	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
199	1041 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	551	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
200	1042 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	552	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
201	1043 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	553	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
202	1044 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	554	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
203	1045 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	555	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
204	1046 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	556	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
205	1047 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	557	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
206	1048 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	558	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
207	1049 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	559	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
208	1050 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	560	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
209	1051 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	561	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
210	1052 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	562	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
211	1053 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	563	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
212	1054 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	564	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
213	1055 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	565	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
214	1056 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	566	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
215	1057 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	567	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
216	1058 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	568	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
217	1059 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	569	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
218	1060 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	570	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
219	1061 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	571	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
220	1062 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	572	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
221	1063 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	573	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
222	1064 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	574	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
223	1065 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	575	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
224	1066 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	576	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
225	1067 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	577	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
226	1068 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	578	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
227	1069 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	579	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
228	1070 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	580	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
229	1071 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	581	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
230	1072 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	582	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
231	1073 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	583	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
232	1074 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	584	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
233	1075 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	585	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
234	1076 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	586	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
235	1077 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	587	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
236	1078 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	588	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
237	1079 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	589	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
238	1080 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	590	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
239	1081 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	591	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
240	1082 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	592	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
241	1083 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	593	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
242	1084 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	594	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
243	1085 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	595	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
244	1086 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	596	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
245	1087 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	597	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
246	1088 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	598	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
247	1089 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	599	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
248	1090 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	600	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
249	1091 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	601	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
250	1092 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	602	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
251	1093 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	603	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
252	1094 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	604	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
253	1095 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	605	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
254	1096 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	606	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
255	1097 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	607	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
256	1098 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	608	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
257	1099 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	609	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
258	1100 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	610	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
259	1101 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	611	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
260	1102 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	612	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
261	1103 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	613	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
262	1104 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	614	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
263	1105 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	615	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
264	1106 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	616	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
265	1107 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	617	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
266	1108 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	618	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
267	1109 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	619	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
268	1110 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	620	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
269	1111 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	621	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
270	1112 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	622	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
271	1113 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	623	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
272	1114 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	624	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
273	1115 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	625	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
274	1116 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	626	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
275	1117 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	627	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
276	1118 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	628	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
277	1119 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	629	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
278	1120 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	630	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
279	1121 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	631	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
280	1122 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	632	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
281	1123 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	633	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
282	1124 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	634	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
283	1125 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	635	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
284	1126 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	636	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
285	1127 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	637	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
286	1128 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	638	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
287	1129 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	639	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
288	1130 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	640	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
289	1131 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	641	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
290	1132 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	642	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
291	1133 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	643	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
292	1134 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	644	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
293	1135 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	645	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
294	1136 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	646	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
295	1137 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	647	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
296	1138 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	648	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
297	1139 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	649	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
298	1140 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	650	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
299	1141 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	651	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
300	1142 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	652	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
301	1143 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	653	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
302	1144 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	654	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
303	1145 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	655	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
304	1146 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	656	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
305	1147 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	657	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
306	1148 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	658	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
307	1149 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	659	353 Unicom	197	+	3.12
308	1150 LSC Ind	121	+	48.81	660	353 Unicom	197		



THE TIMES
Mees Pierson

CORPORATE GOLF CHALLENGE

1,000

CHALLENGE MADE. RISE. JOIN THEM

- A C Lloyd (Builders) Ltd
ACM Shipping Ltd
ADABS
AEG Europe (UK) Ltd
AIE Yorkshire
AICO International Ltd
APC International Pte
AT & T Network Systems UK Ltd
ATA Equity & Law
Abbey National Benefit Consultants Ltd
Able Instruments & Controls Ltd
Acco Europe/Probat
Acoustics Group
Air Movement Design Ltd
Aerospaces
Aien Steel (Asset Management) Ltd
Aire Stewart Partnership
Airspeed Slingshot UK Ltd
Aison Associates
Alliance & Leicester/Glaxo Bank
Allied Dunbar
Allied Dunbar (West Midlands Region)
Allied Dunbar (Yorkshire Region)
Allied Dunbar Assurance (Head Office)
Allied Dunbar Assurance (Swindon)
Alltop Financial Services
Ains & Young
Alpha Precision Eng (Poole) Ltd
Alpen Wolkert Ltd
Alubus UK Ltd
Alme Pte
Alpines (UK) Exploration Company
Anglo Holt Construction Ltd
Apollo Metals (UK) Limited
Apollo Video Film Hire Ltd
Applied Closures Bradford
Applied Communications Inc Ltd
Aqua-Gas (Valves & Fittings) Ltd
Anchor Leisure
Armstrong Watson & Co
Arthur Anderson
Ashdown Hurrely & Co
Asset Management Services
Associated Lullum Ltd
Associated Nursing Services Ltd
Associated Silver UK Ltd
Association of Independent Tobacco Specialists
Atlas Elektronik
Avis Rent A Car
Aven & Wiggins Health Service
Aven Insurance
B E W (Auto Product) Ltd
B M S
B M T The Park Hospital
B P Chemicals
B P Oil UK Ltd
B P Oil UK Ltd
B P Oil UK Ltd
BASF Pk Colours & Specialities Div
BDO Sloy Hayward
BP Oil (UK) Ltd
BP Refineries
Bain Hogg
Baker Beauty
Bank of Montreal
Banque Paribas
Barclaycard
Barclays Bank
Barclays Bank / Clarkson Hyde
Barclays Bank South East Region
Barclays Life Assurance Co Ltd
Barclays Vehicle Management Services
Barkers International Communications Ltd
Bates Western Limited
Bates Weston
Bayer Pk
Beauchcroft Stanleyes
Beacons Business Interiors
Bell & Watson UK Pte
Bennett Brooks & Co Limited
Benny Limited
Benson McGevery Henderson
Bentin Leighton
Bentley Hamlyn
Birmingham Manufacturing Jewellers Ltd
Birmingham Midshires Mortgage Services Ltd
Birmingham Pte
Blackbuster Video UK Ltd
Blue Circle Industries Pte
Booth Weston Associates Pte
Borax Europe Ltd
Bowlster Business Forms
Bowring Murphy & McLennan Ltd
Boyd & Lloyd Office Supplies
Brachers Solicitors
Bradley Lorman Electronics Limited
Bradley Packard
British Airways Maintenance Cardiff
British Airways Travel Shops Limited
British Dental Association
British Midland
British Midland Airways
British Pacing Group
British Steel Pte
Brookvale Kidneys
Brownhills Glass Co. Ltd
Brown Shipley & Co Ltd
Brunel UK Ltd
Brunel Johnson & Co
Building & Property Facilities Management
Building Precision Engineers Ltd
Burrows Keith & Associates Ltd
Bury & Walters
Business Systems & Dealing
Business Systems Group Ltd
Buswells & Co
C B C Oxford
C M G Computer Management Group (UK) Ltd
C-C Group Limited
C.L.C. Group Ltd
C.M.L.
CGP Technology
CSI Computing Services for Industry Ltd
CWS Ltd Funeral Service Group
Calderston System Consultants Ltd
Candem Systems Ltd
Cantor (NY) Ltd
Cames - Building Materials
Cambell Restin Hk
Canada Ltd
Canary Wharf Management Ltd
Capital Asset Finance Limited
Carston Gent Limited
Camshaft Metallurgy Cloumex Pte
Carpet & Flooring (Midlands)
Catherine Communications
Celtic Vacuum UK
Charoity Insurance Group
Charles Bennett Interiors
Cherries Russell
Cherries Taylor & Co Ltd
Cherlands Homes
Cherthhouse Tinty
Chese
Chemical Corporation (UK) Ltd
Chemical Manufacture and Refining Ltd
- Children Building Society
Children With Learning Ltd
Christchurch Investment Management Ltd
Citibank N.A.
Citroen Pte
Citroen Scottish Open
City Electrical Products Ltd
City Inter Ltd
Citynet Integrated Information Systems Ltd
Claremont Business Environment
Clarke Parry
Clifford Medical Investment Group
Cliffhams Limited
Clyde & Co
Clyde Perseus Pte
Co-Operative Insurance Society
Coca-Cola & Schweppes Beverages
Colin Buddle & Company
Colonia - Baltica Insurance Management
Colour Library Books Limited
Combined Insurance Company of America
Commercial Union Assurance
Congregational & General Ins. Pte
Conrad Ribbit
Coopers & Lybrand
Coopers & Lybrand (South Coast Practice)
Cornhill Life
Corporates Risk Pte
Cotnam Stamela JV
Coutts & Co
Coutts Carter Consultants
Credit Agricole
Credit Suisse
Crestis Insurance Brokers
Crown Windows
Curtis Holt Ltd
Customland Ingredients Ltd
D H Marten & Sons
DFDS Transport Ltd
DFPC Executive Search
Dane Commercial Credit Limited
Darrell Thwaites Pte
Dartnec Pte
Data Connection Services Ltd
Data Connection Ltd
Deatsman International
David Patten & Sons (N.L.)
Devenham Group Pte
DeKotte & Touche
Decourt Trucks
Denton Hall Solicitors
Department of Economic Development
Derbyshire Building Society
Derry Landscapes & Garden Design
Design & Innovation
Devonport Management Limited
Dickinson & Co
Digital Co Ltd
Digital Equipment Co Ltd
Doleman - Horsman
Dolg & Smith
Donaldson Lufkin & Jenrette
Doncaster Rugby Union Football Club
Dorn and Co.
Dorn Metal Services
Dow Chemical Co Ltd
Dowell
Down Jones Telecast
Downie Wilson C.A.
Drake Tooling & Abrasives Ltd
Draxton Group Ltd
Du Pont (UK) Ltd
Dudley Stationary Limited
Dun & Bradstreet
Dunsell Batteries Ltd
Dunwoolcraft Ltd
E B S
E.B. Smith (Westhaven) Ltd
ESSE Ltd
Eagle Star Life
East Midlands Airport
Easton Public Relations Ltd
Ede Holdings Ltd
Edgar & Elston
Edmundson Electrical Ltd
Edward Stirlington (Sugan) Ltd
Edward Lewis
Elen Computing
Electrol Review
Electrolux Group Ltd
Emmet & Young
Essex Shipping Services Limited
Esselte Ltd
Eugenia Ltd
Eurupop
Europe - European Express Limited
Eversheds (East Midlands) Solicitors
Excellibur Group Holdings Ltd
Expone International UK Ltd
Export International Group Pte
Export North Sea Ltd
F C Fortnum & Partners
Falmouth Ltd
Falcon Panel Products Ltd
Falconet Limited
Financial Management Bureau Ltd
Finning Ltd
Finmarch UK Ltd
First National Building Society
Fishburn Bower
Fitzcarron Pte
First Financial Nt Ltd
Firstclass (UK) Ltd
Forbes & Company
Forbes & Partners
Forbes - CP Ltd
Fork Truck Maintenance
Foster Lewis Stone
Foster Yeoman Ltd
Four Squares Division of Marks UK Ltd
Frank McCabe Civil Engineering Ltd
Frank Williams & Fox/BDO Sloy
Frederick International Ltd
Frenvel Topping
Froehman Churny Galt/Wooden Spoon Chlge
G W S UKS (Shropshire) Ltd
GEC Plessey Semiconductors
GKN Pte
Garton Engineering Pte
General Signal Networks
Generale des Eaux
Genial Limited
Gerridge Solicitors
Glasdon Group (Lancaster)
Godwin Astley & Peasna Ltd
Godwins Limited
Grain & Feed Trade Association
Grant Thymon
Graysco Limited
Greenwoods Solicitors
Greytford Leisure Ltd
Guardsford (GB) Ltd
Guardian Insurance Pte
H P S S
H Turner & Son Ltd

- H.M. Casterline & Eccles - Investigation D
 H.S. Pipeclamping Ltd
 HSEB Gibbs Ltd
 Harmond Suddards
 Hallowell Fox
 Halifax Property Services
 Halliwell Landau
 Harrogate Holdings Ltd
 Hanson Wills
 Harro Shop Equipment Limited
 Harvest Agriculture Supplies
 Haselden Natural Distribution Limited
 Hayes Express Services
 Hayes Rentals
 Hayward
 Healey Electrical & Building Services
 Henry Cooper & Partners - British
 Henry Dagers & Co Ltd
 Hewitson Bacon & Shaw
 Heston Estates & Co
 Hill Price Distribution Ltd
 Hodgsons
 Holland & Sherry Ltd
 Holland & Sherry Controls Systems Ltd
 Hoogovens Steel Service Centre Ltd
 Hugh James Solicitors
 Hyatt Hotels & Resorts
 Hymans Robertson Consulting Actuaries
 I B H Exton Hall Hospital
 IBC Group Plc
 IBS British Independent Hospital
 IBS Cambrian Hospital
 IBS Greater Manchester
 IBS Midland Hospitals
 IBS North Down Hospital
 ICL Financial Services
 I C L (North)
 INESCO Ford
 ITM Ltd
 Ian Scott & Company
 Ireland & Co
 Imperial Tobacco Limited
 Inco & Co
 Industrial Staffing Group Ltd
 Intech Promotions Ltd
 Engineering Projects
 Interface Europe Ltd
 Interplan Plc
 International Petroleum Exchange
 Invicta Radio Group
 Island Freight Services
 Howitt & Son Ltd
 J Rothschild Assurance Plc
 J T Thorpe & Son Ltd
 JBA (UK) Limited
 JET
 J.P. Taylor Whitehead Ltd
 Jockisons Chartered Accountants
 Jaguar Cars (Hull) Ltd
 James & Cowper
 James Mann & Co
 John Duxon & Company
 John Fyfe Limited
 John Good & Sons Group
 John Hambro Shippers & Co Ltd
 John Scott & Partners Ltd
 Johnson & Higgins
 John-Henry Clark Ltd
 Julian Hodge Bsc
 K F J Resourcing Ltd
 K.I. Electronics
 KPMG
 Kiddy Services Limited
 Kennedys
 Ken McGoee Oil (UK)
 Keystone (UK) Ltd
 Kie Cam (UK) Ltd
 Kiddie Grenner
 Kitchens Impex
 Knapen Building Products Ltd
 Knappex UK Ltd
 Knook Ltd
 Kruger Tissue Group
 Kusmer H & G Offshore Ltd
 LPH Group Plc
 La Menga Property Services
 Laco Mauer
 Laing Homes
 Lamco Paper Sales Ltd
 Langford & Thomson
 Laram Engineering Limited
 Lawrence Graham
 Lawton Mardon Packaging
 Lawton Mardon Star Ltd
 Leach Bright
 Leaver Portfolio Management
 Lee & Priestley Solicitors
 Levy Gas
 Liberty
 Lincoln National
 Lloyds Bank Plc Corporate Banking
 Lombard
 Lombard General Insurance Company Ltd
 London Bullion Market Association
 London International Financial
 London Metal Exchange Golf Association
 Lonsdale Travel Group
 Lookers
 Lookers Planned Motoring Limited
 Loope Stewart Plc
 Lowell White Durrant
 Luddon Construction Ltd
 Lyon Pisher
 M D Foods Ingredients (UK) Ltd
 M D S
 M J Glenison Group Plc
 M M I Ltd
 M V A
 MATTIE Group PLC
 Mackenzie Hudson & Chartered Accountants
 Macao & Jones Group
 Macmillan
 Macmillan Blair & Co Ltd
 Magnet Security Systems Ltd
 Main Trust & Bae UK Ltd
 Management Science Ltd
 Manchester Publicity Association
 Mann Motorships Ltd
 Marston Harborough Building Society
 Marks & Spencer
 Marsh & McLennan Global Broking Ltd
 Mast International Organisation Plc
 Maths Ltd
 Mayespring Civil Service Sports Area
 McClure Walters
 McCormick (UK) Plc
 McDermott Marine Construction Ltd
 McDougall Rose
 McEwin Wallace
 McGregor Royal Associates
 McKenna & Co
 McNichols Construction
 Measure - Rile Ltd
 Messier-Person NV
 Messier-Person Securities (UK) Ltd
 Mezz Plc
 Metromat Textel (Ug) Ltd
 Mercury Communications Ltd
 Meridian Business Support Plc
 Meritis Bank London Branch
 Microsoft Limited
 Midland Shires Farmers Ltd
 Mills Associates Ltd
 Mobil Oil Company Ltd
 Moger & Sparrow (Solicitors)
 Monksheads & Belslett Hospitals NHS Trust
 Monrovia Plc
 Monrovia Ltd
 Morgante Chemical Ceramics Ltd
 Morley Group Ltd

- Mortgage Trust Ltd
Mortworthy City Ltd
Mot MacDonnell
Muller International Ltd
Murphy Res Ltd
N B Selection Ltd
N C M
N H S Wales
N I C S Sports Association
NH3 Timber Ltd
NH5 UK
NH5 Banks Pic
Nippon Bakelite Winter
Nist West Motors Services
Nithes
National Farmers Union Hurts & Berrie
National Mutual Life
National Westminster Bank
National Westminster Pic
Nationwide Building Society
Needham Enterprises Ltd
Nelson
Nestlé UK Ltd
Neville Russell
New Boston Partners Ltd
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TMD Cast
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Clenched fist that struck a mighty blow for patriotism



Then Pearce came marching forward. A fierce patriot, a player pilloried by the purists for his lack

ON MONDAY

David Miller remembers an extraordinary display of courage from Pete Sampras

David Miller remembers an extraordinary display of courage from Pete Sampras

By that time, the fervour that had grown slowly after the opening draw with Switzerland and then leapt forward with the wins over Scotland and Holland, had created a heady but unfamiliar

A black and white photograph of a man standing outdoors. He is wearing a white short-sleeved polo shirt with a V-neckline. The word "UMERO" is printed in bold, dark letters across the chest, above a crest featuring a lion's head. He is also wearing dark-colored shorts with a large white number "3" on the left leg and the word "UMERO" on the right leg. The background is dark and out of focus.

Kicking and screaming: Pearce invites the Wembley crowd to celebrate the public exorcism of the ghosts of Italia 90

"It always feels like a long way when you walk up to take a penalty," Pearce said this week, "but that day, walking up from the centre circle, it felt like it was about four miles."

His kick sped like a bullet low to Zubizarreta's left and bulged the corner of the net. Pearce walked over to the crowd and yelled at them, his lower jaw jutting out.

Gascoigne scored from the next England kick and then Seaman saved from Nadal, and it was all over. Seaman got much of the attention afterwards but it was that image of Pearce that became the defining moment of the tournament, just as Gascoigne's tears

For Pearce, it brought redemption after six years in his own purgatory. For many of those who stared down from the stands, it carried its own kind of emancipation, too.

Thornton takes Devils back to top

The cost of running a team

The British Ice Hockey Association received a great deal of criticism in past years but under its stewardship, the game had stability and excellent sponsorship.

Outside the Superleague, there are two separate competitions covering the northern and southern halves of the country, but several clubs are in trouble, notably in Hull, Peterborough and Dumfries. So the future is far from rosy as the season enters its second half.

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TLS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

CRICKET: ADAMS DEFIES AUSTRALIA'S BOWLERS IN THIRD TEST AFTER ANOTHER FAILURE BY LARA

West Indies' lead restricted by tireless McGrath

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON IN MELBOURNE

MELBOURNE (second day of five): West Indies, with one first-innings wicket in hand, are 14 runs ahead of Australia

THOUGH it was tough sledding against Australian bowlers who allowed them no slack, West Indies' chiselled out a slender lead by the end of the second day of this third Test. With two innings almost completed, the winners could declare themselves by Sunday night and, given what is known about the way these teams respond to pressure, Australia appear the more likely victors.

West Indies, who were 86 for four when Hooper ran himself out shortly after lunch, owe their first-innings lead to three men. Chanderpaul batted soberly for his 58, Murray favoured a more direct approach in making 53 and Adams, who has so far frustrated Australia for 57 overs, reached his own half-century towards the end of a day in which only 204 runs were scored, so niggardly was the bowling and so sharp the fielding.

Standing tallest among the bowlers was McGrath, who has taken five for 40 from 27 overs, an outstanding effort when one considers that Gillespie left the field with a side strain after bowling three overs, never to return. For the fourth time in five innings, McGrath captured Lara's wicket and, not one to graze in the outfield, it was his pick-up and throw from mid-on that accounted for Hooper.

Lara has fallen to McGrath six times in Tests, and seems to have no answer to the New South Welshman, who got him here in the over before lunch. West Indies' star batsman had clearly steered himself to play a big innings, taking 14 balls to get off the mark and showing a respect-

ful bat to Warne, who had just had Samuels snaffled with customary brilliance by Taylor at slip.

Switching to bowl round the wicket, McGrath persuaded Lara to attempt a drive without fully adjusting his balance and his half-cocked stroke gave Warne a comfortable catch at fourth slip. It might be more truthful to call that position 3A, because there was room to drive a bus between Mark Waugh at second, and where Warne was standing. Altogether this was fine bowling and fine field-setting by Taylor, whose deployment of resources is masterly.

Even in his moderate form, Lara's wicket remains the one that bowlers covet, and West Indies could not really afford that loss. Hooper, that elegant underachiever, has never been a man to rely on and nobody chose to donate his wicket to the Australian cause. Warne fielding McGrath's neat throw by the stumps as the desperate Guyanese finished distinctly second best.

There was no keeping McGrath out of the action. When Chanderpaul tried to

drive him down the ground, McGrath stuck out his left hand and held a magnificent return catch. When those catches stick, there is always an element of luck, but he had more than earned it for the persistence and sharpness of his bowling.

Another wicket then, and West Indies would really have been up a gum-tree. Instead, Murray put bat to ball in his uncomplicated style, and Adams, who has been woefully short of form, tried to rediscover it by occupying the crease. By batting through to stumps, Adams played his part admirably.

In 30 overs together, he and Murray added 90 for the sixth wicket, and it took the new ball to separate them. Murray had not passed up many invitations to hook, and McGrath was always looking to get him on the back foot. This time, "fetching" the ball from off stump, Murray top-edged a straightforward catch to Reifel, running round the boundary at long leg.

When, in his next over, McGrath followed up two short balls at Bishop with a full-length one that left the batsman defenceless to a shout for leg-before, West Indies were 23 runs short of the lead. They were still four runs behind when Ambrose, shaping to cut Warne, missed a leg break, and had just gone ahead when Reifel bowled Benjamin.

Perhaps the most memorable feature of the day was the Australian fielding. Blewett twice returned the ball straight to Healy from fully 90 yards and once made a superb stop at mid-off to save four. There is nothing ostentatious about the Australians in the field — unlike England, whose players are forever performing calisthenics. They simply get the job done.



Warne salutes the brilliant slip catch by his captain, Taylor, that sent back Samuels early in the second day's play. Photograph: Stuart Milligan

India's batting crumbles as Donald applies full throttle

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

SOUTH AFRICA, drawing inspiration from superb fast bowling by Allan Donald, took complete control of the first Test against India at Kingsmead, Durban, yesterday, finishing the second day 299 runs ahead with six second-innings wickets standing.

With Donald taking five for 40 and his pace colleagues — Pollock, Klusener and McWilliam — offering no respite at the other end, India, who resumed at two without loss, were shot out for 100, which left them 135 behind on first innings.

Donald, who was forced to leave the recent series in India midway through the second Test in Calcutta due to a heel injury, proved virtually unplayable and has taken 22 wickets in the last six Test innings.

Donald's haul included the prized scalp of Tendulkar, the India captain, who was bowled for 15. "I've never been so happy taking a wicket," Donald said. "It was the quickest pitch I've seen at Kingsmead for a long time."

There were some doubts about Donald's dismissals of Srinath and Johnson, the former appearing to be caught off his arm-guard while the ball which dismissed Johnson, taken at short leg, appeared to loop off the batsman's shoulder.

By then, however, the India innings was damaged beyond repair. They were floundering at 72 for five at lunch, none of the top batsmen looking comfortable against pace bowlers who, cheered on by a crowd of 12,000, took full advantage of favourable conditions.

It was India's lowest score against South Africa, the previous lowest being the 137 made at Calcutta earlier this year. It was also their lowest score since 1987-88, when they were bundled out for 75 in Delhi by the West Indies fast bowlers.

The India new-ball pair,

Srinath and Prasad, also looked dangerous but failed to cause the same disruption as in the South Africa first innings, although Kirsten was dismissed by Prasad with only four runs on the board.

However, Hudson and Bacher consolidated South Africa's advantage with a second-wicket partnership which was worth 111 when Bacher (55) spooned a catch off Kumble.

Hudson looked a lot more confident than during his innings of 80 on the opening day. Hooking and pulling with great certainty, he reached his half-century, containing eight fours, from only 82 deliveries. Bacher, who was first to reach his fifty, struck one more boundary but faced 93 balls.

Prasad quickly accounted for Cullinan and when Hudson (52) was also caught off Kumble, South Africa had slipped to 120 for four. But Cronje, the captain, and Gibbs played out the day with little discomfort.

SOUTH AFRICA: First Innings 235 (A C Hudson 80; B K V Prasad 5 for 60).

Second Innings

A C Hudson c Tendulkar b Kumble 82
G Kirsten c Donald b Prasad 56
A M Bacher c Tendulkar b Kumble 55
W V Cronje not out 17
H H Gibbs not out 25
Total (4 wickets) 184

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-4, 2-115, 3-120, 4-120

BOWLING: Srinath 15-3-42-0; Prasad 15-2-45-0; Johnson 9-1-38-0; Kumble 10-3-19-2; Gangauly 2-0-0-0

INDIA: First Innings

V S Raghoe c Hudson b Donald 7
W V Ramen b Pollock 16
S C Ganguly c Klusener b Pollock 16
S R Tendulkar b Donald 15
M Azharuddin c Bacher b McWilliam 15
R Srinath b Bacher 10
T N Mungie c Richardson b Donald 4
A Kumble not out 18
A Smith c Cullinan b Donald 0
D Johnson c Bacher b Donald 3
B K V Prasad c Richardson b Klusener 4
Batas (c 4, b 5, nb 2) 16
Total 100

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-2, 2-22, 3-36, 4-52, 5-68, 6-74, 7-74, 8-74, 9-88

BOWLING: Donald 16-5-40-5; Pollock 8-2-18-2; Klusener 7-1-34-1; McWilliam 8-2-27-2

Umpires: S Borne (New Zealand) and D Orchard (South Africa)

Holloioake sets fine example



Holloioake: outstanding

BEN HOLLOIOAKE, the Surrey all-rounder, was the only England player who shone against Pakistan in the third under-19 international in Lahore yesterday.

Having dismissed Pakistan for an unimpressive 237, the stage seemed set for England to build on the earlier successes of the three-match series, which they lead 1-0.

But, despite a promising start, the batsmen failed to dominate Abdul Razzaq, the seamer, or Imran Tahir, the

leg spinner, and were 167 for seven at the close.

It was left to Hollioake, who had bowled superbly to take six for 40, to show the specialist batsmen the way. He ended the day 44 not out, comfortably the highest score.

Holloioake began well, taking the vital scalp of Ahamad Saeed, the Pakistan captain, when he was on 77, and then mopping up the tail.

When England went in to bat, they lost Stephen Peters for nine and David Sales for 16

but still seemed comfortably placed at 105 for two. At that point, Gareth Barry was leg-before for 32 to Tahir, who then bowled Nash for a duck.

After Andrew Flintoff (30) and Chris Read (14) had departed, it was left to Hollioake and Zac Morris to try to see out the four remaining overs.

They almost made it, but Razzaq, swinging the ball considerably, bowled Morris for nought in the last over to leave England in deep water.

Pakistan may recall Salim

PAKISTAN are hoping to be able to call on Salim Malik to reinforce their team for the remainder of the World Series limited-overs tournament with Australia and West Indies.

Mohammad Zahid, the fast bowler, has a hand injury and Saeed Anwar, the opening batsman, is ill with a virus, leaving the Pakistanis with only 12 healthy players to choose from for the day-night match against Australia A at the Sydney Cricket Ground today. Their next World Series

game is against Australia on New Year's Day.

The Pakistan squad was already one short after Salim withdrew just before the departure for Australia after straining an ankle in a match against New Zealand. Wasim Akram, the Pakistan captain, said he expected to know today whether Salim would be fit to rejoin them.

Pakistan's batsmen have failed in their past two outings. They were dismissed for 67 in the second innings to lose

a four-day match against Tasmania and were bowled out for 123 on Thursday in a limited-overs defeat by Queensland.

Saeed tried unsuccessfully to resume training on Thursday and Wasim said a decision on whether he would return home would be made shortly. "His blood pressure is high and he's looking very, very weak," Wasim said. "The virus is making him weak from walking, running or even standing."



Salim: fitness test

Saviours of sanity in a mad world of sport

Welcome to the real Sporting Achievements Awards of 1996. The titles annually doled out by this, the column of columns, are, of course, the only ones that count. Congratulations to all the winners, and many thanks to all who wrote to me with suggestions for this space during the past 12 months.

Wicketkeeper of the year: shared by Lee Gernon, of New Zealand, and Andy Flower, of Zimbabwe; the first time both captains in a Test match have been keepers.

Rugby league player of the year: Craig Randall, of Salford, was ruled out of a match against Wigan after playing the previous four matches with a broken ankle. "At least the lads now know I wasn't faking an injury."

Renaissance goalkeeper of the year: a new addition to my prized collection of Albert Camus, Vladimir Nabokov, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Julio Iglesias and the Pope. Step forward, Che Guevara: revolutionary, political icon and, best of all, goalkeeper.

Renaissance goalkeeper of the year (runner-up): 50 years ago, John Woodcock, sage of Longparish and former cricket correspondent of *The Times*, kept goal for Oxford against Cambridge at hockey. The final score was 3-3.

C. B. Fry award for versatility: Nancy Navalta. The sprinter, from the Philippines, took part in a men's event one weekend and a women's event the next.

Boxer of the year: Nino Benvenuti, a former world middleweight champion, who walked away from it all to care for lepers.

Litigation of the year: an American woman sued a nine-year-old Little League pitcher after being struck in the face by a wild pitch.

SIMON BARNES



On Saturday

Statistic of the year: Australian males are shrinking. The average height is now 5ft 9½in; seven years ago it was 5ft 9½in.

Pusillanimity award: Australian cricket team, for refusing to play cricket in Colombo during the World Cup.

Pusillanimity award (runner-up): England cricket authorities, who still have no plans to invite Sri Lanka, the world one-day champions, save for a single Test in 1998.

C. B. Fry versatility award (runner-up): Diego, who insisted on boxing three rounds with Santon Laciard, a former world flyweight champion.

Best entry in *Wisden* 1996: fried calamari stopped play.

Sporting revolution of the year: Elaine Canty, a woman, was appointed to the disciplinary panel of Australian No Rules Football. A proper appointment: "I can smell a token tart's job from a mile off."

Rhino-suited marathon-runner of the year: Mark Millington was the first man (in 4hr 50min) of the six runners who completed the London

Marathon in rhino suits in aid of the Save the Rhino International.

Facing facts award: a British crew at a French regatta: "The problem is that we were very slow compared with the other teams."

Praising Hitler award: as usual, this coveted prize goes to Marge Schott, owner of the Cincinnati Reds baseball team. "When he came in he was good... everyone knows he was good at the beginning, but he just went too far."

Jobsworth award: the customs officials who stopped Sergei Bubka, pole-vaulter and one of the greatest athletes in history, on his entry into Brazil. Suspicious of his equipment, they saved his pole in half.

Wicketkeeper of the year (runner-up): Wayne James, playing for Matabeleland against mighty Mashonaland, made 99 in the first innings, took nine catches in one innings, 13 in the match (a world record), and in the second innings managed to score 99 not out.

Fine of the year: Ian Russell, an Australian rugby league player, was fined Aus\$5,000 for drinking the wrong brand of beer.

Radical appointment of the year: the England Under-15 cricket teams hired Julien Fountain, a baseball coach.

Fishy result of the year: Frankobaa 0, Nayam Stars 22: Nayam thereby promoted on goal difference. Alas, the Ghana Football Association smelt a rat; both clubs were docked three points and Nayam stayed put.

Goalkeeper of the year: Jorge Campos, for playing two matches in a day: an international for Mexico, and then, half an hour later, a club match for Los Angeles Galaxy.

Promotion gimmick of the year: Palm Springs Suns, a minor league



Surgical operation of the year: Pele had his vasectomy reversed at the age of 55

baseball team, encouraged supporters to attend naked.

Naked archer of the year: Alison Williamson, British champion, who posed topless for *Esquire* magazine.

Administrator of the year: John Middleton, chief executive of the Grand National Archery Society, for his reaction to the *Esquire* incident: "It's even less than a storm in a teacup."

Author of the year: the anonymous manager of an Italian Serie B football club who won a competition for erotic short stories.

Fielder of the year: Paul Crabb, who, playing cricket in a match between Ilfracombe rugby club and Woolacombe, fetched a big hit back to the ground by bus.

Golfer of the year: Bill Billings, who scored his first hole in one at the age of 87. Being a sensible chap, he only took the game up when he retired.

Whingers of the year: the Australia cricket team, who refused to go to Sri Lanka for the World Cup because of their fears about security, finally went there in the autumn. Guess

what they complained about? Security. It was too tight.

Prophet of the year: Ali Bacher: "Test cricket is definitely a possibility in ten to 15 years." The country in question is Scotland. England quakes in its boots.

Nun of the year: Sister Pierangela, the footballing nun of Montaleno. Alas, she was removed by her order, and, distressed, returned home to the United States.

Violent event of the year: Great Britain Lionesses' rugby league tour of Australia.

Jobsworth of the year (runner-up): the Chelsea FC steward who turned away an improperly-dressed visitor by the name of Diego.

Resene of the year: the players who prevented the referee, Luigi Fedele, from choking to death on his chewing gum in a match in Italy.

Rock group of the year: a French heavy metal band called Aston Villa.

Italian footballer of the year: Pierpaolo Curti, Serie C player who, like Gauguin, gave it all up to paint.

Italian footballer of the year (runner-up): Alessandro Veronesi, who, sent off by a female referee, responded by kissing her cheek.

Rescue of the year (runner-up): Tonya Harding, ice-skater and celebrated obstructor of the course of justice, who saved an elderly lady who collapsed in a bar by performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Reborn hope of the year: Once again, the British ski-jumping fraternity is seeking to establish a ski-jump in this country.

Greetings to every one, and remember: as long as British ski-jumping exists, hope springs eternal in the mad world of sport.

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IN BRIEF

Dawn of hope for Morning Glory

EXILE, the Hong Kong yacht that lost two hours after being forced to restart the Sydney to Hobart race, took the lead yesterday from *Morning Glory*, the 80ft German maxi, which was, however, expected to overtake the smaller yacht again overnight.

Exile, a 65-footer, was one nautical mile ahead of *Morning Glory* as the leaders entered the Bass Strait between the Australian mainland and Tasmania.

About 100 pilot whales and a number of large humpback whales joined the race leaders, forcing a number of yachts to take evasive action to prevent a collision.

Dublin date

American football: Ireland will host National Football League teams for the first time on July 27, when the Pittsburgh Steelers meet the Chicago Bears in the American Bowl in Dublin. The capital will become the ninth city to host an American Bowl, which was first held at Wembley Stadium in 1986.

Doherty's cue

Snooker: Ken Doherty, the champion, takes on John Parrott in the first match of the Dr Martens European League at the Diamond Centre, Irlingham, today. Other matches are Ronnie O'Sullivan against Steve Davis, and Peter Ebdon against Jimmy White.

Taylor's target

Darts: Phil Taylor will be hunting a fifth world title and a record prize of £45,000 when he begins his latest defence of the world championship at the Circus Tavern, Purfleet, Essex, today.

Oliver Holt on the man providing divine inspiration at Green Bay White rules as minister for defense

People laughed at Reggie White when he announced his decision. They accused him of sacrificing the chance of Super Bowl glory for mammoth payoffs from Dallas Cowboys and San Francisco 49ers and choosing another team instead. White had a different story. He said God had told him to come to Green Bay.

Once, perhaps 20 or 30 years ago, his claim might have provoked less cynicism. There seemed to be a stronger link then between God and gridiron, a certain nobility in the strivings of the nation's young men, the kind of qualities that led to Roger Staubach, the Cowboys quarterback for much of the Seventies, being nicknamed God's quarterback.

But the National Football League (NFL) these days is a godless place, a place where drug busts and sex scandals are regular news, where image and trash-talking have become equally, if not more important, than talent, where commercialism and the rush for endorsements is all-powerful.

The problems may be no worse than in other sports but White's pronouncements still appeared outlandish in comparison, especially as the terms of his four-year, \$17 million contract in 1993 were there for all to see and the Packers were hardly in a position to challenge for the Super Bowl.

White's religious beliefs — he is an ordained minister — were made all the harder for some to accept because he has become one of the most famous players in the modern game by excelling in the art of sacking the quarterback — thudding in to him as he tries to pass the ball and crumpling him to the floor. No one has more sacks than him, not Lawrence Taylor, once of New York Giants, not anyone.

His habit, for instance, of hurling players to the floor in pursuit of the quarterback and then going back to help them up with the assurance "Jesus loves you" has raised a few eyebrows, particularly when

one considers that he made his name with the fearsome Philadelphia Eagles "body bag" defense in the early Nineties. Eleven times in succession now, his fellow professionals have elected him to represent his position of defensive end in the Pro-Bowl, a kind of NFL Select team.

But White, 35, is unbowed. His decision to move to Green Bay, a small community on the shores of Lake Michigan, a town where there is no African-American population, has already been vindicated by the generosity shown towards him when his church in his native Tennessee was burnt down by arsonists. It will cost more than \$1 million to rebuild and more than \$200,000 has already been donated by residents of Wisconsin.

Two weeks ago, the Packers

The Detroit Lions have dismissed Wayne Fontes, their coach, after eight seasons, making him the sixth NFL head coach to lose his job since the end of the season. Fontes, who had one year left of his contract, took the Lions to just one win in five games in the NFL play-offs, which led to his downfall.

awarded him a new five-year deal worth \$19 million to keep him in Green Bay until the end of his career. The Packers need not take part in the first round of play-off matches this weekend because their record is so good they have earned a bye as well as home-field advantage.

Two days before the Packers' crushing defeat of Minnesota Vikings on Sunday — a match White ended by holding a prayer meeting on the turf at Lambeau Field with players from both sides — he sat in one of the small rooms in the Green Bay front office, watching the snow falling thickly on the parking lot and speaking of the reasons why God brought him there.

"The people here have responded to the preaching of the gospel," White said. "They have responded to the way I feel about Christ and they are

not offended by The Word. If I had gone to Frisco or Dallas, maybe people would have been, but not here. Some of the things I'm trying to do to create opportunities for people, they have responded to that also. This is a much different place to what I imagined.

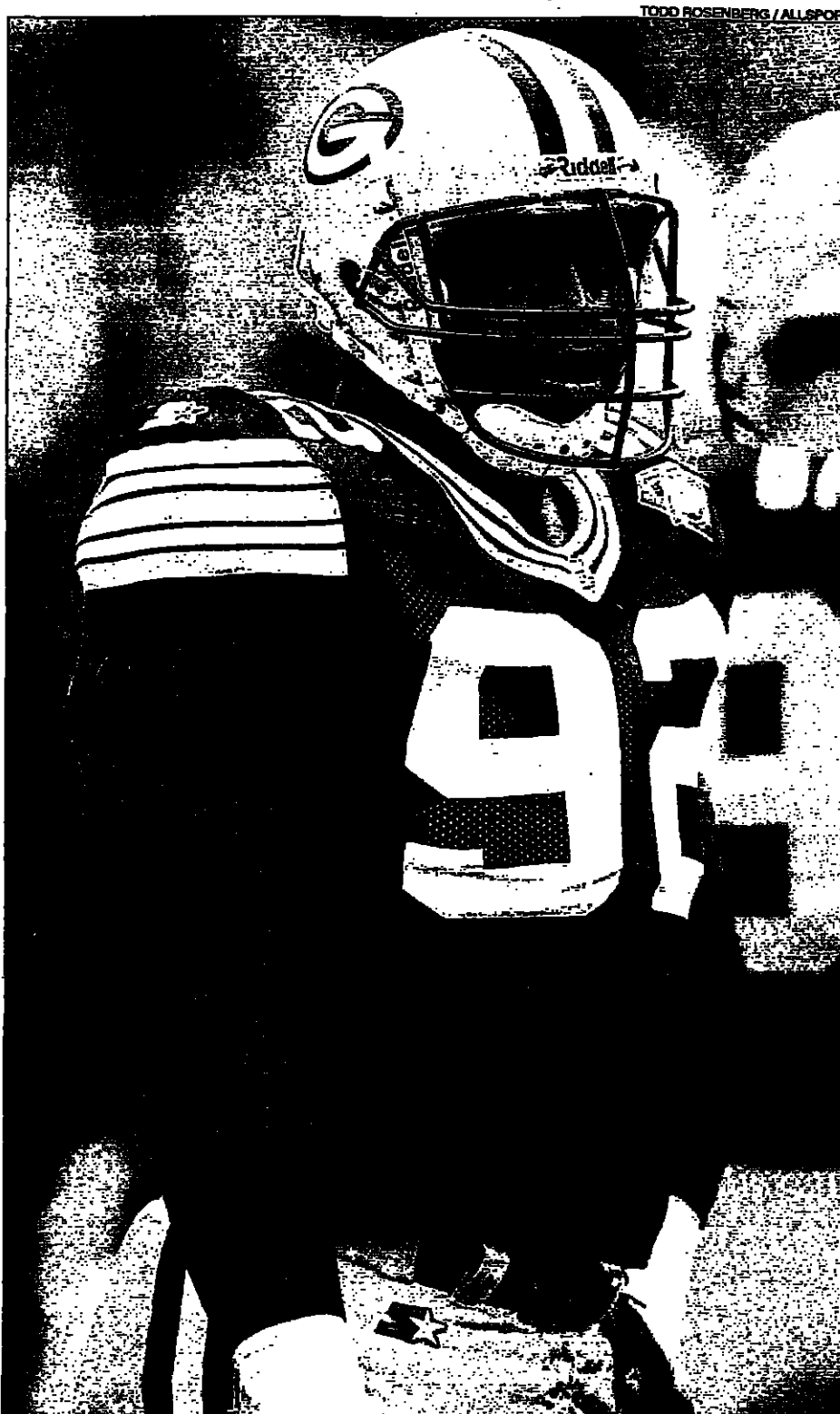
There are still those, of course, who find it difficult to reconcile his wild-eyed pursuit of the quarterback — in what is basically an attempt to disable, temporarily, an opponent — with his preaching and his efforts to set an example for others. "Football is not violent," he insisted. "It is when people kill each other and all the wars we have going on, that is violent. What we do is not violent, it is aggressive. We do not go out with the intention of killing each other. It is a game which happens to have a lot of contact. But it is a controlled contact."

"I have no problem with it because the way I conduct myself on the field reflects something of what I am off it. When I preach, when I talk to somebody about the Lord, I am very serious about it. All the things I do in a physical way on the field, off the field, I may do them in a spiritual way or a mental way."

This year, the Packers are likely to give White his best shot so far at winning the Super Bowl, a goal that has almost taken on the air of a crusade for him and his fans. It may be his last chance, too. He has been in the league for 12 seasons now and probably only has two more left in him, while the Packers, who lost only three of their 16 games this year, may be approaching their peak.

"As a football player," he said, "I would feel unfulfilled if I had to retire without winning a Super Bowl. But as a person, no, I realise that even if I did win a championship, if my life is not lived in such a way that I am affecting other people's lives, then that Super Bowl ring will never mean a thing."

NFL WILD-CARD GAMES: NFC: Dallas v Minnesota; San Francisco v Philadelphia; AFC: Cincinnati v Jacksonville; Pittsburgh v Indianapolis.



White shows his opponents no mercy and leads the league in quarterback sacks

SAILING

Golding in sight of second success

BY EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

MIKE GOLDING on *Group 4* was on course yesterday for back-to-back wins in the first two legs of the BT Challenge Cup, as he raced towards Wellington, in New Zealand, with the highest average speed in the fleet and only 300 miles to sail.

Golding's crew were in good spirits to be finally sailing under blue skies and a steady breeze which allowed an unchanged full sail plan for 24 hours. "It was Santa's treat to us and our little bit of relaxation — no real changes for a whole day," the crew reported.

Golding, who won the first leg to Rio de Janeiro by just two hours from Simon Walker on *Toshiba Wave Warrior*, was almost 60 miles ahead of his nearest pursuer, Andy Hindley, on *Save The Children*, yesterday. He will need to sail into a big hole to be chased that close to the line this time.

Further back, however, several yachts battling it out for fourth and fifth

BT Challenge chart — 38

places have found themselves becalmed — a cruel fate for their crews, after having survived all that the Southern Ocean has thrown at them over the past month.

The victims are Richard Tudor, on *Nuclear Electric*, Tom O'Connor, on *Pause To Remember*, and Merlyn Owen, on *Global Teamwork*. The beneficiary is Richard Merriweather on *Commercial Union*, who has steered a more southerly course than his three nearest rivals and picked up more breeze.

Yesterday, *Commercial Union* covered 20 miles in six hours, which was enough to overtake both *Nuclear Electric* and *Pause To Remember*, moving her into sixth place. The next boat in her sights was *Global Teamwork*, the most northerly of the fleet.

On *Teamwork*, the frustration was clear enough. Owen reported: "The last [position] pull has seen us lose over 40 miles to the fleet in 24 hours. The lead boats are now in a north-westerly and are pulling away at nine knots. Unless something happens very soon, we're going to find ourselves at the back of the middle pack, instead of very much at the front. After being in the top three for most of this leg, this is almost too much to bear."

ATHLETICS: EUROPEAN CHAMPION SEEKS TO COMPLETE HAT-TRICK OF IMPORTANT CROSS-COUNTRY VICTORIES AT DURHAM

In-form Brown can put icing on British cake

BY DAVID POWELL
ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

TWO weeks after becoming the first British man for 21 years to win a senior international cross-country title, Jon Brown today attempts to complete a hat-trick of wins that would provide a fitting conclusion to 1996, the year of the British distance-running revival.

Already this month, Brown, 25, has defeated Paul Tergat, the world champion, in a cross-country race in Spain, following that up with a victory in the European championships in Charleroi, Belgium, where he denied Paulo Guerra, of Portugal, a third successive title. On neither occasion was he operating at full

throttle. In the Bupa County Durham cross-country today, Brown may need to press the pedal to the floor.

He faces Daniel Komen, the Kenyan who shattered Noureddine Morceli's 3,000 metres world record by 4.44sec in September and whose staying power is evident from his 5,000 metres in Zurich in August, where he won in 12min 45.09sec, and his 5,000/10,000 metres double at the junior world championships of 1994. Last night Brown acknowledged: "This will be my toughest race so far."

Brown played the first ace in Britain's hand this year when, at the world cross-country championships in March, he finished as the highest-placed European. Liz McColgan's

victory in the Flora London Marathon, and those of Paul Evans and Marian Sutton in the Chicago Marathon, strengthened the British hand in world distance-running. Now Brown is on a winning run and he is seeking to become the first Briton to win the Durham men's race since Eamonn Martin in 1990.

But for developing a cold the day before the 10,000 metres final in Atlanta, Brown would no doubt have finished top European there too, but narrowly conceded rank to Stéphane Franke, from Germany.

If he can give Komen a close race, it should underline his belief that a top-six place in the world championships — in cross-country and on the track — is within his scope in 1997. Brown

was born in Bridgend, educated in Sheffield and Iowa, and recently moved from Duisburg to Vancouver. His wife, Martina, is German and Brown arrived from Düsseldorf last night after spending Christmas at his in-laws'. Komen was in Durham 24 hours ahead of Brown, his early arrival from Kenya proof of his statement that he is here to win, not just for an easy by.

This may not be a two-man race. Assafa Mezgebu, last year's winner, from Ethiopia, returns and there is a profusion of Britons who will be seeking to make a name in front of the BBC cameras. They include Neil Caddy, controversially omitted from the European championship team, and Keith Culgan, a potential medal

winner in Charleroi who caught flu a week before the race and Rob Whalley, who was eighth in the World Cross-Country Challenge in Brussels last weekend.

Durham marks the return of Paula Radcliffe, who defends her title not having raced since October. The organisers have not been gentle on her, lining up Gede Wani, the world champion, as opposition. Hayley Haining, who finished ahead of Radcliffe in the 1991 junior world championships before prolonged injury intervened, will be defending her position as this winter's British No 1. Radcliffe, who broke Zola Budd's 5,000 metres British record last summer, is working her way back from a knee injury.

COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND'S FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 3.00 unless stated
denotes all-England matches
points system: 3 for a win, 1 for a draw, 0 for a loss
denotes pitch resurfaced

FA Carling Premiership

(1) Arsenal v Aston Villa
(2) Chelsea v Sheffield Wed
(3) Coventry v Middlesbrough
(4) Derby v Blackburn
(5) Everton v Wimbledon
(6) Leicester v Nottingham Forest
(7) Manchester Utd v Leeds
(8) Newcastle v Tottenham
(9) West Ham v Sunderland

Nations League

First division
(10) Barnsley v Manchester City
(11) Bolton v Southampton
(12) Charlton v Wolverhampton
(13) Crystal Palace v Stoke
(14) Huddersfield v Ipswich
(15) Norwich v Bradford
(16) Oxford Utd v Reading
(17) Port Vale v Portsmouth
(18) Swindon v Oldham
(19) Sunderland v Gillingham
(20) West Bromwich v QPR

Second division

(21) Bradford v Chesterfield
(22) Bristol Rovers v Millwall
(23) Burnley v Gillingham
(24) Crewe v Bournemouth
(25) Luton v Wycombe
(26) Notts County v Plymouth
(27) Peterborough v Wrexham
(28) Preston v Blackpool
(29) Rotherham v Bury
(30) Shrewsbury v York
(31) Stockport v Watford
(32) Walsall v Blackpool

Third division

(33) Colchester v Fulham
(34) Darlington v Leyton Orient
(35) Exeter v Cardiff
(36) Hartlepool v Hibernian
(37) Lincoln v Chester
(38) Mansfield v Doncaster
(39) Northampton v Barnet
(40) Rochdale v Hull
(41) Scarborough v Brighton
(42) Scunthorpe v Wigan
(43) Swalehead v Carlisle
(44) Torquay v Cambridge Utd

Fourth division

(45) Accrington v Grimsby
(46) Aldershot v Colchester
(47) Boreham Wood v Grimsby
(48) Boreham Wood v Grimsby
(49) Boreham Wood v Grimsby
(50) Boreham Wood v Grimsby

Fifth division

(51) Accrington v Grimsby
(52) Aldershot v Colchester
(53) Boreham Wood v Grimsby
(54) Boreham Wood v Grimsby
(55) Boreham Wood v Grimsby

Sixth division

(56) Accrington v Grimsby
(57) Aldershot v Colchester
(58) Boreham Wood v Grimsby
(59) Boreham Wood v Grimsby
(60) Boreham Wood v Grimsby

Seventh division

(61) Accrington v Grimsby
(62) Aldershot v Colchester
(63) Boreham Wood v Grimsby
(64) Boreham Wood v Grimsby
(65) Boreham Wood v Grimsby

Eighth division

(66) Accrington v Grimsby
(67) Aldershot v Colchester
(68) Boreham Wood v Grimsby
(69) Boreham Wood v Grimsby
(70) Boreham Wood v Grimsby

Vauxhall Conference

(1) Altrincham v Bromsgrove
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First division

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Eighth division

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Ninth division

(37) Altrincham v Bromsgrove
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UNION LEAGUE: Premier division

(1) Altrincham v Bromsgrove
(2) Bamberley v Bamberley
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First division

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Second division

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Ninth division

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JEWELLER DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier division

(1) Altrincham v Bromsgrove
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JEWELLER DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier division

(1) Altrincham v Bromsgrove
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JEWELLER DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier division

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Fifth division

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THE TIMES GUIDE TO THE PREMIERSHIP THIS WEEKEND

ARSENAL

A tense Friday for Arsenal as they waited to see if Ian Wright would be let off the disciplinary hook again. How vital his goals are to the Gunners and how recklessly he gets himself into trouble! The return to the midfield by Patrick Vieira will give it greater bite. Villa's recent form, destroyers of Wimbledon, limp victims of Chelsea, gives Arsenal the psychological edge. But they still badly lack creative flair in midfield. Maybe they should look at Villa's Curcio, only a substitute just now. BG

ASTON VILLA

Mark Bosnich was not a happy bunny after the 2-0 defeat against Chelsea on Boxing Day. Villa's colourful custodian having conceded his side's first goals in five matches. He was more than a trifle at fault, too, yet preferred to channel his ire in the direction of football's crazy festive programme. "Why do we run our players into the ground for the sake of entertainment?" Bosnich griped. "They don't run racehorses four times in a week, do they?" Poor little soldier. RK

BLACKBURN ROVERS

Tony Parkes has done a remarkable job in transforming Rovers. Now he is preparing for the biggest test yet. The caretaker manager has lifted his temporary charges off the bottom, and now there is faint hope of a place in Europe, rather than the once very real fear of relegation. But Rovers have still to win away in the Premiership this season, and Parkes wants to see that depressing run dealt with this afternoon. He has a worry over Colin Hendry, with a leg injury. DM

CHELSEA

It seems sure that Rudi Gullit, the manager, himself playing so powerfully in central defence, will keep the impressive striking partnership of Mark Hughes and Gianfranco Zola that has served Chelsea so well in the last two games. It will be interesting to compare Zola with another tiny, gifted but less consistent Italian, Benito Carbone, of Wednesday. The return of Eddie Newton has strengthened Chelsea's midfield. Vialli, Leboeuf and Wise must wait their time on the bench. BG

COVENTRY CITY

Gordon Strachan, a manager of only seven weeks, is now bursting with confidence after Coventry's three successive wins. His purchase of Darren Huckerby, from Newcastle, is also proving a big hit at Highfield Road, so much so that Strachan has offered a few words of wisdom to his senior Premiership colleagues. "We had Darren down for a week's trial first, so we could have a look and assess him properly," Strachan said. "Perhaps all managers should do that." RK

DERBY COUNTY

Aljosa Asanovic will play against Blackburn Rovers this afternoon after being given a "tactical rest" on Boxing Day. "European players are not used to the demands we make over Christmas and the new year," Jim Smith, the manager, said. However, Derby will need more than the wiles of the inspirational creative influence of the Croatia international as they attempt to recover from three successive defeats and Smith has promised "a lot of scrapping" in the weeks ahead. RH

EVERTON

Everton have been hit by an injury crisis, with Dave Watson, Craig Short and Andy Hinchcliffe all out of the defence. Tony Grant and Joe Parkinson struggling to be fit in midfield, and Andrei Kanchelskis still battling against influenza. No sign of them copying Middlesbrough and calling the game off, though. Instead, youth team players Richard Dunne and John Hills stand by to make their debuts, along with Graham Allen, who appeared briefly on Boxing Day. PB

LEEDS UNITED

As if Leeds losing the (apparently) easiest of their four holiday matches, against Coventry, was not bad enough, Tony Yeboah is continuing to make waves for George Graham, the manager. Yeboah came on for the last 18 minutes against Coventry. "It was good to get some action," he complained yesterday, "but I need to start games so I can improve my fitness and confidence." Graham is more concerned about his defence at Old Trafford today and at Newcastle on January 1. PB

LEICESTER CITY

Frank Clark had resigned just a few hours earlier when Martin O'Neill pre-empted questions by ruling himself out of contention for what was then the vacant managerial job at Nottingham Forest. The mystery is why anybody should have considered that O'Neill would leave Leicester, where he is winning fresh acclaim with each week. The sides meet at Filbert Street this afternoon and it is a measure of their relative progress that Leicester's supporters expect a victory. RH

LIVERPOOL

It is said that Liverpool can not function without Steve McManaman, but against Leicester City, the absence of Robbie Fowler looked significant. "We missed him because Stan Collymore is not as good as leading the line," Roy Evans, the manager, said after the disappointing draw. Hence the urgency in getting Fowler fit from an ankle injury he suffered against Wimbledon. The forward trained yesterday morning, and if there is no reaction today, then he should play tomorrow. DM

MANCHESTER UNITED

With nine goals and Andy Cole back, it has been a brilliant Christmas so far for Alex Ferguson, the manager, and with two home games remaining over the holidays, United's charge is beginning to look ominous. "The players are looking good and fresh," Ferguson said. "We've had to change the team all season, so there's nobody, apart from Beckham and Cantona, who has played a lot of games. And having someone like Andy Cole returning after his injuries and illness is a major boost." PB

MIDDLESBROUGH

An *annus horribilis* could end on an improved note at Coventry today. A win would certainly endorse the assertion of Bryan Robson, the manager, that the Boxing Day victory against Everton indicated his troubled side had finally "turned a corner". Mere survival may not be enough to persuade Ravanelli to stay for long but Robson declared: "A lot of people said this club couldn't attract top players. We have and now people are trying to make it fall down." LT

NEWCASTLE UNITED

Some home-spun philosophy from Terry McDermott, the assistant manager, about the current troubles. "We can't quite put our finger on why we are getting beat, but it probably has something to do with the fact that three, four or even five of our players are not playing up to the standard we know they are capable of." Could be on to something there, Terry. Relief could be provided by David Ginola, who is in line for a return following a calf injury. DM

NOTTINGHAM FOREST

In a dismal season, the development of Alf-Inge Haaland has offered a morsel of cheer. Now Forest are facing up to the possibility of losing the combative midfielder player, a Norway international. His contract expires at the end of the season, and Leeds United have already shown interest. With Manchester United also believed to be monitoring the situation, Haaland said, somewhat ominously: "I want to stay, but the conditions of the contract have to be right for me." RH

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

It has been a frustrating route back, but Regi Blinker should return to the starting line-up against Chelsea for the first time since his suspension by FIFA for signing contracts with two different clubs. "It is annoying enough to lose your place, but to lose it because of paperwork is very difficult to accept," he said. "But I am back in contention, and I just want to play and forget about the incident." Mind you, he may find it hard for a few weeks after a £30,000 fine. DM

SUNDERLAND

Rumours that Peter Reid, the manager, might be tempted to transfer his talents to Nottingham Forest were laughed off by the man himself. "I'm happy where I am," he said yesterday. And so Reid should be. He is one of the five best-paid managers in the Premiership. Sunderland, away at West Ham today, are without Kevin Ball, who has a broken jaw; Gareth Hall and Martin Scott are also injured. Reid admitted: "We are going to be stretched at the back for the next three weeks." LT

HOW THEY STAND

	Pts	Goal diff	Last five
1 Liverpool	20	+18	LWWDD
2 Arsenal	19	+17	WWOLD
3 Manchester Utd.	19	+16	WDWWL
4 Wimbledon	18	+8	DWWWW
5 Aston Villa	18	+10	WWWWL
6 Newcastle	19	+7	LDLWL
7 Chelsea	19	+3	LWLWL
8 Everton	19	+4	LWLWL
9 Tottenham	18	+2	LWDLWL
10 Sheffield Wed.	19	-1	DWDDW
11 Sunderland	19	-7	WLWLW
12 Derby	19	-2	WLWLW
13 Leicester	19	-7	LWLWL
14 Leeds	19	-7	WDDWL
15 Coventry	19	-8	LWWWW
16 West Ham	18	-9	LDLWL
17 Middlesbrough	18	-10	LDLWL
18 Blackburn	18	-8	DWDLW
19 Southampton	18	-8	LWLWL
20 Nottm Forest	19	-18	LWLWL

WEST HAM UNITED

With the team blowing so cold, the only bubble at Upton Park these days is the one covering the pitch. Filled with hot air, it should ensure that the match against Sunderland today goes ahead. But do not expect a classic as Harry Redknapp, the manager, asks his players to exchange flairs for fortitude. "We need a couple of niks," Redknapp, who knows that defeat could send his team into the bottom three, said yesterday. "We have got to get back to being hard to beat." Were they ever? KP

WIMBLEDON

The decision of Graham Poll, the referee, to postpone the Boxing Day game with West Ham United was frustrating but inevitable, according to Joe Kinnear, the manager. The goalmouth in the shadow of the new Holmesdale Road stand was "like concrete, and dangerous", he said, "but it may be a blessing. We may be going up to Everton a little fresher than them." The injured ankle of Chris Perry would have ruled him out on Thursday, but he has "an outside chance" of playing today. NS

Reports: Brian Glanville, Peter Ball, Russell Kempson, Richard Hobson, Louise Taylor, Nick Szczepanik, Keith Pike, David Maddock. Statistics: Julian Desborough

ARSENAL v ASTON VILLA

TICKETS: Sold out
10-YEAR RECORD: 2-1, -2, 3, 0-1, 5-0, 0-0, 1-2, 0-0, 2-0

HOW THEY LINE UP
ARSENAL (from): J. Lukic, L. Dixon, A. Linighan, A. Adams, P. Vieira, M. Kozov, S. Boud, N. Winterburn, R. Parfitt, P. Merson, D. Bergkamp, I. Wright, M. Rios, R. Garcia, S. Morris, J. Harrison, V. Bartram, F. Shaw

ASTON VILLA (from): M. Bosnich, F. Nelson, A. Wright, U. Ekeogu, S. Staunton, R. Sornesse, A. Townsend, M. Draper, T. Taylor, S. Miosic, D. Yorke, S. Curcio, J. Joachim, T. Johnson, C. Tier, L. Hendrie, G. Farrelly, M. Oakes

CHELSEA v SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

TICKETS: Seats available
10-YEAR RECORD: 2-0, 2-1, -4-0, -0-3, 0-2, 1-1, 1-1, 0-0

HOW THEY LINE UP
CHELSEA (from): F. Grodas, D. Petrescu, R. Gullit, F. Leboeuf, S. Clarke, A. Myers, G. Vialli, M. Hughes, D. Wise, M. Duberry, C. Burley, R. di Matteo, S. Minto, F. Sencilar, G. Zola, E. Newton

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (from): K. Pressman, P. Atherton, D. Stefanovic, J. Newcome, S. Oakes, D. Walker, I. Hedges, S. Nicol, G. Whittingham, G. Hyde, M. Pennington, R. Binner, R. Humphreys, A. Booth, D. Hirst, L. Briscoe, M. Williams, W. Collins, B. Linighan, O. Trustfull, B. Carbone

COVENTRY CITY v MIDDLESBROUGH

TICKETS: Seats available
10-YEAR RECORD: -2, 3-4, -2, 2-1, -0-0

HOW THEY LINE UP
COVENTRY CITY (from): S. Ogilvie, R. Shaw, L. Daley, D. Dublin, P. Williams, P. Tetter, K. Richardson, G. McAllister, J. Solari, N. Whelan, D. Huckerby, E. Jess, B. Bonnows, R. Genaux, W. Boland, J. Flann

MIDDLESBROUGH (from): G. Walsh, N. Cox, C. Morris, S. Vickers, Emerson, M. Beck, Juninho, F. Ravanelli, C. Blackmore, C. Hignett, G. Liddle, J. A. Fordist, C. Freestone, M. Summers

DERBY COUNTY v BLACKBURN ROVERS

TICKETS: Sold out
10-YEAR RECORD: 3-2, -2, -0-2, -0-2

HOW THEY LINE UP
DERBY COUNTY (from): R. Hault, M. Taylor, J. Laursen, L. Carsley, G. Rowett, D. Yates, P. McGrath, I. Simeas, C. Powell, D. Powell, S. Flynn, A. Asanovic, P. Troloope, C. Dailly, D. Sturridge, A. Ward, M. Gabbadon

BLACKBURN ROVERS (from): T. Flowers, J. Kenna, H. Berg, C. Hendry, G. La Sauc, T. Shenwood, L. Bohinen, W. McKinlay, J. Wilcock, N. Gudmundsson, G. Doris, S. Given, G. Fenton, M. Marier, G. Croft, M. Brookes, D. Out

EVERTON v WIMBLEDON

TICKETS: Seats available
10-YEAR RECORD: 3-0, 2-2, 1-1, 1-1, 1-2, 2-0, 0-0, 3-2, 0-0, 2-4

HOW THEY LINE UP
EVERTON (from): N. Southall, P. Gerrard, E. Barnett, D. Unsworth, A. Kanchelskis, N. Barry, J. Ebbrell, A. Grant, J. Parkinson, D. Ferguson, G. Speed, G. Stuart, M. Branch, P. Rideout, M. Jackson, P. Hockaday

WIMBLEDON (from): N. Sullivan, C. Cunningham, A. Kimble, V. Jones, D. Blackwell, O. Leonardson, R. Earle, E. Ekeogu, D. Holdsworth, M. Gayle, C. Perry, J. Goodman, A. Reeves, A. Thom, B. McAllister, N. Ardley, S. Castledine, M. Harford, A. Clarke, J. Ewell, P. Fear, P. Head

LEICESTER CITY v NOTTINGHAM FOREST

TICKETS: Sold out
10-YEAR RECORD: 3-1, -1-1, 1-2, 0-0, 1-0, 2-4

HOW THEY LINE UP
LEICESTER CITY (from): K. Keller, S. Grayson, J. Watts, S. Prior, C. Hill, P. Rotherham, S. Campbell, M. Izzi, M. Roberts, S. Clatridge, E. Heskey, N. Lennon, N. Lewis, G. Parker, S. Taylor, J. Lawrence, K. Poole

NOTTINGHAM FOREST (from): M. Crossley, S. Pearce, C. Cooper, S. Chettle, D. Saunders, K. Campbell, I. Wain, N. Jerkin, C. Allen, A. Haaland, N. Clough, S. Gemmell, J. Lee, B. Roy, D. Lytle, S. Batherwick, A. Fettes

MANCHESTER UNITED v LEEDS UNITED

TICKETS: Sold out
10-YEAR RECORD: -1, 1-1, 2-0, 0-0, 0-0, 1-0

HOW THEY LINE UP
MANCHESTER UNITED (from): P. Schmeichel, G. Neville, D. May, R. Johnson, D. Irwin, D. Beckham, N. Butt, E. Cantona, R. Giggs, P. Scholes, O. G. Solskjaer, P. Neville, A. Cole, K. Poborsky, B. McClair, P. Thornley, R. van der Gouw, R. Kenna

LEEDS UNITED (from): N. Marley, C. Palmer, D. Wetherell, P. Bateley, Emerson, M. Beck, Juninho, F. Ravanelli, C. Blackmore, C. Hignett, I. Rush, B. Deane, A. Yeboah, R. Wallace, R. Harte, M. Ford, M. Barney

NEWCASTLE UNITED v TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

TICKETS: Sold out
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 2-0, 2-2, -0-1, 3-3, 1-1

HOW THEY LINE UP
NEWCASTLE UNITED (from): P. Strickland, W. Barton, J. Beresford, D. Batty, D. Pascoe, R. Lee, P. Beardsley, A. Shearer, L. Ferdinand, F. Aspinall, R. Elliott, D. Givens, S. Hyslop, K. Gillespie, S. Watson, L. Clark, P. Albert, P. Kinnear

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (from): I. Walker, E. Beardsley, S. Carr, D. Austin, C. Calderwood, J. Scales, S. Campbell, C. Wilson, D. Howells, S. Nethercott, J. Edinborough, A. Sinton, A. Nielsen, R. Fox, S. Iversen, E. Sutherland, J. Dozzell

LEADING SCORERS

14: I. Wright (Arsenal)
11: R. Fowler (Liverpool), A. Shearer (Newcastle United)
10: D. Yorke (Aston Villa)
9: O. G. Solskjaer (Manchester United), F. Ravanelli (Middlesbrough)
8: M. Le Tissier (Southampton)
6: G. Vialli (Chelsea), E. Ekeogu (Wimbledon)
7: L. Ferdinand (Newcastle United), R. Earle (Wimbledon)

CHAMPIONSHIP SETTING

7-4: Liverpool, 9-4: Manchester United, 7-2: Arsenal, 6-1: Newcastle United, 10-1: Aston Villa, 20-1: Chelsea, 40-1: Everton, Wimbledon, 100-1: Tottenham Hotspur

WEST HAM UNITED v SUNDERLAND

TICKETS: Seats available
10-YEAR RECORD: -1, -5-0, -0-0, -0-0

HOW THEY LINE UP
WEST HAM UNITED (from): L. Nikolic, M. Bowen, M. Raper, S. Bile, J. Dicks, K. Rowland, J. Moncur, I. Bishop, M. Hughes, M. Newell, H. Porfiro, D. Williamson, R. Lampard, F. Raducioiu, S. Potts, L. Sealey

SUNDERLAND (from): L. Perez, G. Hall, D. Kubicki, M. Gray, A. McVie, R. Ord, D. Kelly, A. Rae, P. Bracken, S. Agnew, M. Smith, C. Russell, P. Stewart, D. Preece, S. Aiston, P. Heckingbottom, D. Williams, D. Holloway

SOUTHAMPTON v LIVERPOOL

TICKETS: Sold out
10-YEAR RECORD: 2-1, 2-2, 1-3, 4-1, 1-0, 1-1, 2-1, 4-2, 0-2, 1-3

HOW THEY LINE UP
SOUTHAMPTON (from): D. Bassani, C. Lundstram, U. van Gobbel, A. Nelson, E. Berthoud, R. Slater, M. Oakley, M. Le Tissier, J. Magilton, E. Ostenslad, G. Watson, M. Robinson, S. Basham, D. Hughes, K. Monkou

LIVERPOOL (from): D. James, D. Matteo, S. Bjornaby, J. McAllister, M. Wright, N. Ruddock, P. Babb, J. Barnes, S. McManaman, M. Thomas, S. Collymore, R. Fowler, A. Warner, P. Binger

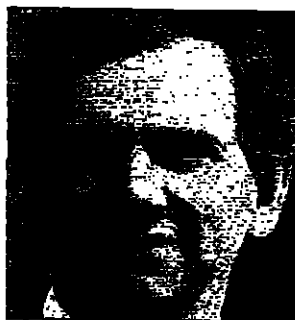
WHEN TO WATCH ON TELEVISION

Today
10.50pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (Highlights)
Tomorrow
11am Sky Sports 2 Goals on Sunday
3pm Sky Sports 1 Ford Escort Super Sunday
Sunderland v Liverpool (live)
The official internet site of the FA Carling Premiership
is at <http://www.faa-carling.com/>

FOOTBALL

Middlesbrough's sick excuse stirs festive headache

ROB HUGHES



Weekend View

THANKS to Middlesbrough Football Club, the old year ends, and the new one begins, with a most serious hangover, a challenge to the fundamental principle that the game is played for the supporters.

Already, the ramifications of Middlesbrough's refusal to play their FA Carling Premiership fixture at Blackburn Rovers a week ago can be felt at both ends of the table. Blackburn and Middlesbrough, fresher than their opponents, had vital wins in their next fixtures on Boxing Day.

Blackburn beat Newcastle United, who already had the handicap imposed, of having played Liverpool in the north-east on Monday night. And Middlesbrough, fielding closer to a full team than Everton, produced their first league win in 13 games stretching back to September 14.

So, on the face of it, the clubs involved in the no-show stole a march on other teams in the midst of the congested fixtures programme. That is bad enough; it cannot be proved that the results would have been different had the fixture list not been re-negotiated. But, long before the FA Premier League inquiry into Middlesbrough's claim that 23 hours before kick-off at Ewood Park, they had 23 professional unfit through illness and injury, damage has been done. First and foremost, the losers are spectators. Imagine those who, in these days of high-priced seating, had looked at the schedule in advance, had planned their business, their budget, or their family life so that they could watch the Brazilians of Middlesbrough, who could well be passing through England for just one season.

Even with so much television, 1996 showed us the communion between supporters and players that has always been the essence of the sport. Did not Germany take out an advertisement at the end of Euro 96 to thank the people for "bringing home" this very principle?

And what, during the 12 months, was more significant than the fact that more than one million people, lovers of the game or just those attracted by the hype, passed through the nine stadiums used for that tournament, and no one was hurt by the experience?

Second to the supporters is the integrity of the competition. Doubtless, Middles-

brough are working on doctors' notes for all 23 of their players caught in the sudden epidemic. Doubtless, Middlesbrough, blaming others for the way Emerson, with his truancy, has messed them about, feel isolated and beleaguered as a club.

However, when it came to Thursday, all the Middlesbrough big guns — Emerson, Juninho, Kavanelli, and Beck — were fit and well to overrun

2-0 at home to a refreshed Chelsea on Thursday.

So, where in the past it was only weather that could tamper with the evenness of the demands on footballing fixtures, there are now other factors that can achieve this. It is business more than sport, and perhaps if the British public wants to see so many exotic overseas talents, it must be accepted that the paymasters are now television, sponsors, and commercial concerns. But woe betide anyone who believes that spectators are expendable.

What is to be done? Blackburn have already called for Middlesbrough to be made to forfeit the three points. Would that be deterrent enough, though? Would it even be fair to others — be they in the relegation zone, or even the quest for a place in Europe, which is not beyond the dreams of Middlesbrough and Blackburn Rovers?

One imagines an easy option would be to fine Middlesbrough, say, £150,000 and reschedule the match. If the advantage already gained is the turning point of Middlesbrough's fortunes, it would be cheap at the price. My son, cursed, perhaps, by the bug of club loyalty, considers that the Premier League should call Middlesbrough's bluff and make them play Blackburn without any of the 23 ailing men.

The punishment has no precedent in the five years of the Premier League. A club crying off from a fixture in this way was not foreseen, although in the Football League, the articles clearly state that failure to fulfil a fixture "without just cause" would be deemed guilty of misconduct.

Taking care, in such times when a club from the Premier League might challenge through the courts for restraint of trade were they, for example, to be demoted, I suggest that January 14 (the date of the inquiry) is a pivotal date for the whole structure.

In olden times, when Alan Hardaker, the League secretary, regarded himself as a supreme and had no tolerance with club excuses, authority would have been draconian. Now, because the future depends on it, the 20 chairmen of the Premiership must decide among themselves what punishment, and what safeguard for their future business, can be determined. They start from scratch, and they face a perilous precedent.

'They should make them play Blackburn without any of the 23 ailing men'

Everton. I leave it there, for it is the Premier League inquiry that must determine the facts. But already the playing field has been tilted this Christmas. I doubt it was coincidence that Newcastle lost at Blackburn and that Liverpool could not beat Leicester City at Anfield, three days after their exhausting encounter at St James' Park.

I watched Aston Villa, again in a match rescheduled for television, dismantle Wimbledon 5-0 on Sunday. Then a Villa team that looked decidedly stale claret succumbed



Emerson: played truant

Derby's lost gem showing true worth

DEAN STURRIDGE

THE FACE OF FOOTBALL



By Richard Hobson

There is an old children's story about the theft of a diamond necklace in which a band of streeturchins discover the stolen item draped around a waxwork in the display of royalty at Madame Tussauds. It was on public view all along, but went unnoticed alongside the fake riches.

The moral is that sometimes the answer is staring you in the face, and cannot be lost on followers of Derby County. The general impression nationwide is that Dean Sturridge, the jewel in their crown, has enjoyed a meteoric rise. In fact, at 23, he believes that only Martin Taylor, the goalkeeper, is a longer-serving player among the present squad.

While others failed, Sturridge waited in the store-room for a chance to be put on show. Now, he is a prime exhibit. Sturridge, however, is not simply a reason for Derby's re-emergence after what he describes as "wasted years". He is symbolic of it.

A million-pound signing was still newsworthy when Arthur Cox, then the manager, tested the generosity of Lionel Pickering, now the chairman, with a succession of expensive signings that left the remainder of the old second division agog. Cox bought young players in the hope that they would not only win promotion but mount an immediate challenge at the higher level.

Thus, Sturridge remained in the reserves as Paul Kitson, Marro Gabbiadini, Paul Simpson and Tommy Johnson arrived at a combined cost of beyond £4 million, while the likes of Mark Pembroke, John Harkes and Craig Short fitted in uneasily behind.

Promotion, though, remained a holy grail. Derby became an unhappy, disorganised collection of individuals. Roy McFarland began to dismantle the side before Jim Smith succeeded where Cox had failed by wheeling and dealing his way into the FA Carling Premiership. Sturridge, liberated by his



Sturridge, the Derby County striker, whose pace is proving a thorn in the side of Premiership defences

longest first team run, scored 20 times in 39 appearances.

"Individually, we might not be as gifted as those players, but we get together with more confidence and play for each other," Sturridge says. "In those days there was so much jealousy and bickering behind the scenes. Too many people did not get on and it became more and more obvious. Those of us in the reserves knew that we did not have a chance because million-pound players were never going to be dropped."

"I thought when Roy took over that things might change. But that was not the case. He sent me on loan for

two months at Torquay — you cannot get much further away — and then brought me back just to play in the reserves. I have to say I was quite happy that he was not the manager at the start of last season because my career was going nowhere."

"The manager and his players have to be able to look each other in the eye and respect one another. If a player cannot do that, he is not relaxed, and if he is not relaxed, he will not play to his full potential. I feel I can look Jim in the eye."

Pace was always seen as Sturridge's biggest asset but questions were raised over his finishing ability. Last

season, he answered those emphatically and this time around he has excited bigger crowds by taking on defenders. His second goal against Leeds United on the opening day of the season was a contender for goal of the month. Three weeks ago, against an Arsenal side including Ian Wright, of whom he has studied hours of footage, he delivered a shot that might earn him the December award.

When he lines up against Blackburn Rovers this afternoon, the days when he felt homesick despite living less than 30 minutes from his roots in Birmingham, will seem a long way away. Yet

the experiences of his older brothers, both strikers, ensure that he will not get carried away.

Simon is presently out of the Stoke City side because of a knee-ligament injury while Martin was released by Birmingham City, then managed by Smith, without making a single first-team appearance and now works in the Rover factory at Longbridge. "Martin liked the drink and the nightlife too much, so he keeps me on the straight and narrow," Sturridge says. "I am a better player, despite what he thinks, but his stories are definitely better. I am pleased it is that way around."

Ogrizovic poised to pass record

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

AS THE matches arrive thick and fast, the injuries escalate alarmingly, club physiotherapists work overtime and the FA Carling Premiership carries on regardless. Groans and moans can be heard all over the land yet the average spectator, understandably, will offer little sympathy to the £20,000-a-week performers.

Rather more regard will be held today for Steve Ogrizovic, 39, the Coventry City goalkeeper. When he steps out at Highfield Road, for the visit of Middlesbrough, it will be his 544th appearance for the club, passing the record set by George Curtis, the former Coventry centre back, 26 years ago.

Ogrizovic, a member of the club's 1987 FA Cup-winning side, did not play for Coventry until a month before his 27th birthday, after a £72,000 move from Shrewsbury Town in 1984. He had spent the early part of his career as understudy, mostly non-playing, to Ray Clemence at Liverpool.

"To beat George's record means a tremendous amount to me," Ogrizovic said yesterday. "He is a folk hero in these parts, for what he has done for Coventry, and when I went to see him recently in hospital, where he was having a new knee fitted, he wished me all the best regarding the record."

Though still fit and healthy, Ogrizovic feels it is unlikely that he will emulate Peter Shilton, 46, who reached the milestone of 1,000 league games a week ago. "I spoke to Peter last week and what he has achieved is an absolutely tremendous feat that I don't think will ever be repeated,"

he said. "I'd have to play for another nine to ten years, until I'm nearly 50, to get anywhere near it."

Middlesbrough will not rest on sentiment, especially as they have at last glimpsed the tiniest shaft of light at the end of the Premiership tunnel. The 4-2 win against Everton on Boxing Day was their first success in 14 league matches and, apparently, their casualty list has dwindled, too.

"It's just pleasing to remember what a victory is like," Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough player-manager, said. "We've still got a lot of injuries within the club but, fortunately, the virus appears to have eased a bit in the last few days and we've only got two players down with it."

Kevin Keegan, the Newcastle United manager, has received little Christmas cheer but may have something to smile about, at last, after Tottenham Hotspur have left St James' Park.

Newcastle's title challenge has faded lately — they are without a win in seven matches — but Keith Gillespie, the winger, remains upbeat. "We still believe in ourselves," Gillespie said. "It will take just one win to turn our season round. The main problem is getting it."

Roy Keane, the Manchester United midfielder player, returns from injury, probably on the substitutes' bench, for the game at home to Leeds United.

Matthew Le Tissier, the Southampton midfielder player, should start a game for the first time in more than a month when Liverpool visit The Dell tomorrow.

Wright to learn his fate over dismissal

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

ARSENAL are likely to hear on Monday if their appeal to have annulled Ian Wright's sending-off against Nottingham Forest a week ago has been successful. Stephen Lodge, the referee, and John Holbrook, his assistant, will spend the weekend reviewing the incident.

Lodge dismissed the England striker for allegedly "raking" Nikola Jerkan, the Forest defender, with his studs. Though Lodge did not see what happened, he took advice from Holbrook before deciding on the punishment.

Arsenal later claimed that Jerkan had been over-dramatic and that the sending-off should be reduced to a booking. The Football Association has subsequently asked the match officials to review a tape of the incident.

A pointer has placed a bet of £10,000 on Manchester United to win the FA Carling Premiership. It forced Ladbrokes, the bookmaker, to cut United's odds from 9-4 to 2-1 second favourites, behind Liverpool at 7-4.

Ian Wassell, a Ladbrokes spokesman, said: "I think people are remembering how United came from behind to beat Newcastle last term." Gary Breen, the Ireland and Birmingham City central defender, is likely to be sidelined for a month after being allegedly assaulted in London. He was struck on the head, and sustained a broken hand, after being confronted by a group of men who had surrounded his car outside a restaurant.

Burns feels warm glow of success

BY KEVIN MCCARRA

VICTORY can make a man invulnerable. A week or two ago, Tommy Burns would have been wounded by the discovery that several of his players were injured, but news yesterday of injuries to Alan Stubbs, Jackie McNamara, Tom Boyd, Peter Grant and Andreas Thom did not even dent his happiness. Celtic's 2-1 win over Aberdeen at Pittodrie on Thursday night had spirited the manager away from commonplace anxiety.

The elation was also abetted by the knowledge that Paul McStay, the club captain, will play for the first time since August, against Dunfermline Athletic at home this afternoon. Burns was seeing breakthroughs everywhere and had also completed a signing.

The man in question was David Hannah, the Dundee United midfielder player, who agreed terms after talks with Celtic yesterday afternoon. Hannah's career at Tannadice had been in turmoil since he challenged the terms of his contract with the club. Were it not for yesterday's move, the matter would have gone before the courts in 1997.

Hannah, who scored in the 2-0 win over Motherwell on Thursday, started only four matches in the Bell's Scottish League first division last season. He was, however, a highly-promising player and, at 23, still has time to fulfil his potential.

The valuation of him depended on balancing his considerable talent against his restricted achievement, but he has cost Celtic £650,000. His future, however, is unlikely to be a match for McStay's illustrious past. The club cap-

tain has been badly missed for his ability to control the tempo of play.

McStay has had recurring problems with an ankle on which no further surgery can be performed and Burns has delicately suggested that the player cannot again be the force he once was. All the same, the manager does think that his return carries the promise of improvement.

"We always knew Paul would come back," Burns said, "but it was hard for him when he was in the depths and it seemed as if his injury was not getting any better. He has worked so hard to come through that. The most important thing he gives us is composure."

While emotional volatility was evident at Celtic Park, there was equanimity at Ibrox. Rangers will rest Alan McLaren this afternoon and introduce Joachim Bjorklund for the match at Rugby Park. Kilmarnock, with Bobby Williamson now confirmed as manager, defeated Hibernian 1-0 at Easter Road on Boxing Day. Their planning for this fixture, though, is complicated by the flu affecting the squad. Paul Wright, though, may be ready to return from injury.

As Kilmarnock rise, other clubs are falling towards them. Hibernian have yet to clarify matters at Easter Road, where Jocky Scott is manager on a caretaker basis, and they play Aberdeen at Pittodrie. Motherwell, whose form is troubled, meet Heart of Midlothian at Tynecastle and the premier division's lowliest club, Raith Rovers, are at home to the swiftly-improving Dundee United.

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CROWNING GLORY 39

Pearce's moment of truth when England were in a spot

SPORT

AMERICAN FOOTBALL 41

Packing a punch: Green Bay's man of God in defense



SATURDAY DECEMBER 28 1996

Rain thwarts Zimbabwe's attempts to stamp their authority on second Test

Sorry England find a silver lining

FROM SIMON WILDE
IN HARARE

HARARE (second day of five): Zimbabwe, with eight first-innings wickets in hand, are 63 runs behind England.

THANK the heavens — literally — for the rainy season in Southern Africa, for it may offer the only hope of England avoiding a sensational defeat at the hands of Zimbabwe, until now acknowledged as the weakest Test cricketing nation in the world. The decision to stage the first Test tour here when the weather is most unpredictable was taken to fit in with England's visit next month to New Zealand; it may just provide the visitors with an inglorious route to salvation.

When the skies opened four balls after tea yesterday, Zimbabwe were 93 for two, admittedly grinding along in first gear but within 63 runs of England's paltry first-innings total and showing every indication of knowing how to bat.

McGrath's riposte 40
Deadly Donald 40
Hollisake's example 40

as long as they like on this untried cake of a pitch. Grant Flower and David Houghton, both of whom have compiled interminable Test centuries here before, are together and look all too eager to produce repeat performances.

The rainfall was so heavy that it was soon apparent that there would be no further play on the second day of this second Test match, thus ensuring the loss of a further 29 overs to the 17 that were cut from the first day. If there are to be further interruptions before Monday evening, England should not yet give up hope of escape, but unless the rains settle in for a long stay, they will not do so without showing that their batting has rediscovered its spine.

Desperate though their position is, England did not do badly in the four hours of play. Crawley and Tufnell, their last pair, held out for 40 minutes and added 10 runs before Tufnell, having reached nine — the second highest score of his Test career — with the help of a streaky boundary past the slip cordon, was unlucky to see a ball from Streak deflect off his midriff and onto his stumps. Even so, England's



Croft, far right, leads the England fielders in an animated but unsuccessful appeal for the dismissal of Grant Flower, the Zimbabwe batsman, yesterday. Photograph: Clive Mason / Allsport

156 was their lowest Test total since Cape Town last January. Defending such a score puts tremendous pressure on a bowling attack and, in the circumstances, Mullally and Gough gave England just the start they needed by maintaining a disciplined line and length, and were quickly rewarded with the wicket of Dekker, who nibbled at an outswinger from Mullally and was caught behind.

That success brought Campbell to the wicket, the least likely of Zimbabwe's batsmen to curb his aggressive instincts to suit the pitch. Sure enough, he played positively and produced his favoured cuts, and although Zimbabwe reached lunch without further loss, six overs after the interval Campbell fell

trying to cut again, but only succeeded in steering a ball from White to Thorpe at first slip. Although the ball was a long hop, England were at least working to a plan, having installed a second slip for Campbell and sent White over the wicket to vary the line of attack.

England were to experience no more joy as Flower and Houghton demonstrated just how to bat in the conditions, eschewing all risks and waiting with infinite patience for the bad balls to come along. To England's credit there were few of these and in 25 overs to tea, this pair added just 47.

By then, Flower, who two years ago batted 11 hours on this ground for an unbeaten double century to set up Zimbabwe's only win in their

21 previous Tests, was 33 not out, having scored 17 in the two-hour afternoon session. So far he has spent 196 minutes at the crease and if he can carry on in the same vein today, it is inevitable England will be batted out of the game.

The value of Flower's innings was not lost on the patient home crowd or on two former England batsmen on the ground who would have known just how to sit on the spilt here: Geoff Boycott and Trevor Bailey. Indeed, Bailey's position as the maker of the slowest half-century in Test cricket (357 minutes in an Ashes Test in 1958-59) appeared in grave danger until Flower opened up against the spinners, twice hitting Croft down the ground and driving Tufnell for four.

This begged the question as to whether England have picked the right bowling attack, as the spinners are experiencing less joy than in the first Test and a fourth seamer — either Silverwood or Caddick might have found this pitch to their liking — might have served better. That said, Croft came close to having Flower caught at the wicket by Stewart off a leg-side flick five overs before tea.

The "super slo-mo" television replays suggested Flower should have been given out, but at full speed the issue is less clear. The thought processes of Russell Tiffin, the umpire, may have been distracted by another frenetic dance from England fielders, in which case they have only themselves to blame.

ENGLAND: First Innings	
N V Knight c A Flower b Olonga	15
(39min, 20 balls, 1 four)	
*M A Atherton c Campbell b Whittall	18
(89min, 49 balls, 1 six)	
1A J Stewart c G W Flower b Streak	19
(62min, 44 balls, 1 four)	
N Hussain c A Flower b Streak	11
(73min, 53 balls, 1 four)	
G P Thorpe c Dekker b Streak	5
(27min, 20 balls)	
J P Crawley not out	47
(218min, 189 balls, 3 fours)	
C White c Campbell b Whittall	9
(63min, 47 balls)	
R D B Croft c G W Flower b Whittall	14
(77min, 55 balls, 2 fours)	
D Gough b Streak	2
(3min, 2 balls)	
A D Mullally c and b Whittall	0
(3min, 2 balls)	
P C R Tufnell b Streak	9
(67min, 37 balls, 1 four)	
Extras (lb 5, w 1, nb 5)	12
Total (88.1 overs, 363mins)	156
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-24 (Atherton 8), 2-46 (G W Flower 17)	

ZIMBABWE: First Innings	
G W Flower not out	33
(103min, 144 balls, 2 fours)	
M H Dekker c Stewart b Mullally	2
(19min, 16 balls)	
*A D R Campbell c Thorpe b White	22
(71min, 53 balls, 2 fours)	
D L Houghton not out	26
(101min, 83 balls, 1 four)	
Extras (lb 6, nb 4)	10
Total (2 wickets, 48.4 overs, 183min)	93

SCORING NOTES: Second day	
Lunch: 26-1 (17 overs, 67min); G W Flower 16, Campbell 15, Tufnell 10, Houghton 26. Rain stopped play at 3.00pm — 23.2 overs lost.	
SERIES DETAILS	
FIRST TEST (Bulawayo): match drawn (scores level).	
□ Compiled by Bill Frindall	

Racing is hit hard as frost bites

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

HORSE racing has again borne the brunt of the icy weather sweeping the country, with the meetings at Kempton Park and Wetherby yesterday both called off. Three of the five cards scheduled for today, at Newbury, Folkestone and Huntingdon, have also fallen by the wayside. Newcastle will have an inspection this morning, but the all-weather track at Wolverhampton is unlikely to be affected.

Richard Pridham, clerk of the course at Newbury, said: "The ground is frozen and there is no prospect of the frost coming out in time. The forecast was for -5C and no rise above zero. It is pretty bleak at the moment." Newbury is also due to host racing on Monday and will have an inspection tomorrow.

A spokesman for Huntingdon said: "We had to abandon the meeting due to frost. The snow has all gone, but the problem is where the ground is bare from being raced on. If we hadn't raced previously this season, we would probably have been all right."

The loss of Kempton proved to be somebody else's gain. Ring & Bryner, the caterer, donated the fresh food prepared for the racegoers to homeless charities. "We have sent our fresh food to London to be distributed," a company spokesman said.

Football has so far lost only two of today's fixtures — Crystal Palace against Stoke City at Selhurst Park, in the Nationwide League first division, and Luton Town versus Wycombe Wanderers at Kenilworth Road, in the second division.

However, many clubs were holding pitch inspections this morning, including Bristol Rovers, Notts County, Peterborough United, Rochdale, Stockport County, Colchester United and Darlington.

Leopardstown preview, page 37

Lacroix's arrival highlights perils of new import policy

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

LONDON already boasts the highest points-scorer in world rugby union, Michael Lynagh, and its most-capped player, Philippe Sella; both plying their trade at Saracens. Yesterday the capital welcomed Thierry Lacroix, the leading points-scorer in the 1995 World Cup, to its increasingly cosmopolitan ranks when the Frenchman signed for Harlequins.

Lacroix, 29, joins two of his compatriots, Laurent Cabannes and Laurent Benaïch, at the Stoop Memorial Ground, where he will spend the next 18 months after signing a deal worth some £250,000. He is likely to make his Courage Clubs Championship debut on January 5 in the derby meeting with Wasps at Loftus Road.

Yet Lacroix's arrival, from Dax by way of Durban, will create another headache for the England selectors, who will see yet another of the game's key decision-making positions filled by a foreigner. Lacroix fulfills Harlequins' need for a top-flight goalkicker, he can play centre or even on the wing, but his reputation is primarily at stand-off half, where he will probably supplant Paul Challenor.

His arrival will also coincide with the return to rugby league of Gary Connolly and Robbie Paul, two midfield players who have made a significant impact with Harlequins. Connolly has partnered Will Carling regularly at centre and Paul has offered valuable cover in most positions among the backs, but they are due to rejoin Wigan Warriors and Bradford Bulls respectively on January 11.

"This has tied in nicely with their return," Dick Best, the Harlequins director of rugby, said. "We have been talking with Thierry off and on for the last 18 months; he's a first-choice goalkicker, an expert tactician, one of those players who can change a game by making the right decision

at the right time." Harlequins have a direct link with Lacroix through Andy Keast, who coached him through a Currie Cup season with Natal before returning to England to begin this season as chief coach at the Stoop.

Natal had little hesitation in playing Lacroix at stand-off, even though France have played him more frequently at centre in his 38 internationals, during which he has scored 367 points, more than any other Frenchman. Of that tally, 116 points came during the World Cup last year, which France concluded with a win in the third-place play-off against England, though Lacroix's form slumped last season and he was dropped after the game with Ireland.

Assuming Lacroix makes an immediate mark, and that Leicester will field Joel Stransky, of South Africa,

in their letter J shirt as soon as possible, eight of the 12 first division clubs will field non-English players in the No 10 jersey in the new year. There is no great encouragement to be drawn lower down the leagues. Of the four clubs pressing for promotion from the second division, two — Richmond and Bedford — field Welshmen at stand-off, and of the other two, Rob Andrew, of Newcastle, has retired from international rugby and Les Harris, of Coventry, will not see 30 again.

All the more reason, then, that the England management should turn out in force at Loftus Road today, where Wasps and Northampton parade two genuine contenders in Alex King and Paul Grayson. If Mike Catt — whose rib injury keeps him out of Bath's game with Sale tomorrow — is under threat as the England pivot, then it can only be from Grayson, who helped England to the five nations' championship last season, and King, who has been the bench replacement this season.

England's considerations are not necessarily those of the wealthier clubs. It has been apparent all season that Harlequins' Achilles' heel has been their goal-kicking. Carling has enjoyed mixed success in that role while Challenor, now 27, has never recovered the form of which he sometimes appeared capable in his younger days and seems unlikely to be given many further opportunities.

Two more stand-offs with points to prove will face each other in the Welsh League at Cardiff. Neil Jenkins, of Pontypridd, lost the Wales No 10 shirt to Jonathan Davies earlier this season, and will be keen to prove the selectors wrong. Eddie Jones, the Pontypridd manager, said: "Neil's first responsibility is to the team and not to his own individual cause."



Lacroix expert tactician

Vialli could miss chance to impress

By BRIAN GLANVILLE

CESARE MALDINI, Italy's new team manager, flies into London today to watch Chelsea play Sheffield Wednesday. He will be able to assess Gianfranco Zola and the much-improved Roberto di Matteo. But unless he comes off the bench as a substitute, it is unlikely that Maldini will be able to run the rule over Gianluca Vialli.

This will be frustrating for both manager and player for, since the resignation from the team management of Arrigo Sacchi, the way seemed clear for Vialli to resume his career with the Azzurri. He and Sacchi have been at daggers drawn since Sacchi dropped him from the 1994 World Cup squad.

Just when it seemed that there might be a rapprochement, Sacchi put his foot in it by revealing that he had taken polls about Vialli among Italy's players. Initially, the result was negative: that was when Milan players dominated the squad. Then, when Vialli's Juventus team-mates were predominant, the vote was in his favour. Humiliated and infuriated, Vialli renewed his boycott of the national team.

Di Matteo has had a couple of poor games for Italy, after which there was speculation there that Chelsea's training was not the kind he needed. Zola, of course, has been in superb form in the last two games, in which he has scored three goals, a sublime solo against West Ham and two pieces of supreme opportunism at Villa Park.

He seems sure to keep his place against Northern Ireland in Palermo on January 22. Di Matteo should at least be in the squad but Vialli may find his way barred by his ex-Juventus partner, Fabrizio Ravanelli, now of Middlesbrough.

Premiership guide, page 42
Weekend View, page 43
Derby's lost gem, page 43



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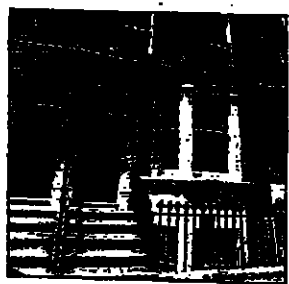
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SATURDAY DECEMBER 28 1996



Ain't no stopping us now

As millions of Britons book their summer family holidays over the next four weeks in their five most popular countries — Spain, France, Greece, Italy and Portugal — millions more will be searching for new destinations as far away from Europe as they can get and in parts of the world that mass tourism hasn't yet reached.

As we approach the millennium, one of the most significant trends in travel is that we are taking more holidays, shorter holidays, and increasingly buying them tailor-made. Four, five or six holidays a year are no longer exceptional. With return flights to Bangkok, Peking, Rio de Janeiro or Nairobi on offer for about £350, and flights to inland Spain and France for about £150, we are also travelling to remoter areas of the world and the remoter parts of Europe — to the new nations of the east and inland from the Mediterranean coast.

Short city breaks are boom-

ing, with British Airways Holidays solidly booked for weekends as far away as New York, Boston or Toronto. Over-50s who once wintered in Spain are now going with Saga for four-week holidays in the Thai sun for £300 a week. Another sign of the times is that Saga, which deals with the over-50s, has been expanding by 30 per cent a year for the past three years, with significant growth to Canada and the United States as well as cruising.

Ask tour operators specialising in adventurous holidays about new destinations for 1997 and the countries constantly mentioned are in Latin America (Peru, Chile, Mexico, Cuba, Costa Rica or Belize) or Asia (Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam). For intrepid travellers, The Yemen, Iran and Uzbekistan earned frequent mentions, as did Egypt and South Africa, both of which are proving highly popular.

It is the young, especially the hundreds of thousands of stu-

dents who set out to explore the world during their gap year or university vacations, who are the trailfinders — and a growing army of retired and affluent over-50s who no longer have to plunk their children on Mediterranean beaches who increasingly follow in their footsteps.

Among the top ten 1997 destinations from STA, which specialises in student travel, are Guatemala for £488, Kazakhstan for £541, Estonia for £252 and Laos for £540. Campus Travel offers Tallin at the even cheaper price of £205 return, Peking for £348, Mexico for £386 and Perth for £641. It costs a lot more than that for the oldies but there are a lot of intrepid over-50s in the 1990s with money to spend, a sense of

adventure, and a determination to see the world and stay ahead of the crowds.

That is why Latin America is so strongly tipped as a continent that is now coming out. Chile seemed almost empty when he was there earlier this year, says Nick van Gruisen of Worldwide Journeys and Expeditions. At Journey Latin America, which now has five different tours to Peru to meet demand, Steve Collins speaks equally enthusiastically of the attractions of Mexico (unanimously considered good value for money), Chile and Brazil. Any traveller who goes to Latin America once, he says, will undoubtedly return to savour a continent which offers the spectacular Andes, the second high-

est and longest range of mountains in the world. Lake Titicaca, the Atacama desert, the civilisations of the Aztecs, the Incas and the Mayas, as well as rainforest and Caribbean beaches.

Unless you backpack, Latin American holidays don't come cheap. A 24-day holiday with JLA costs from £2,500 but includes accommodation, guides and all flights. A two-week individual, tailor-made tour with Worldwide Journeys and Expeditions will also cost from £2,500 but as Mr van Gruisen is quick to point out, on his tour of Chile and Patagonia you get to see two of the wonders of the world — the

Galapagos and Machu Pichu — in one holiday.

Although only 2 per cent of British holidaymakers go on cruises, cruising is suddenly a boom industry. An estimated 420,000 British holidaymakers went on a cruise this year, up 20 per cent for the second year in succession. Thomson announced last week that it is chartering two new ships and will offer 74,000 cruising holidays next year, starting from £399 a week.

Airtours, Fred Olsen, Saga and P&O (offering a 92-day world tour on the new *Arcadia* at £38,380 a head) also have new ships in 1997. The Mediterranean and Caribbean are the favoured areas. A 97-night round-the-world cruise starting in January 1998 stopping at 31 ports at a lead-in price of £6,936 — or £71.50 a day — was announced by Saga this week.

Yet at an average cost per person of £500 — £2,000 for a family of four — most British holidaymakers will travel on

short hauls to Europe next summer and most will still be on package tours. Islands are the popular choice, with Majorca remaining as Britain's favourite holiday destination, and Ibiza and Menorca, the Greek Islands of Corfu, Crete and Zakynthos, the Canaries and Cyprus all featuring in the Top Ten along with Spain, Turkey, the United States, Portugal, the Caribbean and Italy.

Airtours announced a £30 million price-cutting campaign last week but the biggest discounts are on the earliest bookings. With the British economy in better health, the feelgood factor is working for travel too, and all tour operators report that business is booming. Bookings for winter holidays are up by almost 20 per cent and Going Places says that early summer bookings are up by 30 per cent, an increase of 600,000 summer holidays already booked.

Continued on page 2

SHOPPING 23 GARDENING 45 PROPERTY 67 HOME LIFE 8 FAMILY LIFE 9 COUNTRY LIFE 10 TRAVEL 11-18 GAMES 19

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There are three days left until 1997. Either you are in a panic because there are only two more shopping days until January 1, or you exchanged presents with someone over Christmas who was pressed for time, strapped for cash, and couldn't be bothered to give it much thought.

For there is no more dismal Christmas present than a calendar. There you are on Christmas morning, frolicking in tinsel, and shredded wrapping paper, when someone hands you a thin parcel suspiciously lacking in rigidity.

The sparkly paper falls away and you are left holding the *Woman & Home* "Flowers" calendar for 1997. Oh yes, another year is on its way. Christmas is over already, at quarter to lunchtime on

the 25th. Time to start scribbling into your calendar things like "appointment with Dr Fuddyke, March 18" and "Road tax, August 30", and the dream is over.

The novelty calendar is a 20th century version of the death's head that scowled on the desks of intellectual men in ages past — a skull that reminded proud men of their inevitable fate as food for worms. So, in a not dissimilar way, does the gift-calendar prick your seasonal pomp, and remind you not to rest easy in your festive jollity.

What can be more depressing than a calendar? Every one of the forthcoming 365 days gets its own little line and prepares to stare reproachfully down at you from the kitchen wall. Do you have what it takes to fill that line? Or is

your life nothing but an empty sham? Or have you something to look forward to? In which case pencil it in and consider the days in between a write-off.

If, however, you have not been bought a calendar, because you are well loved by all and sundry, and received instead socks and potted conifers, then you will need to buy one. And very little, in the way of horological stationery, is better value at this time of year than calendars.

Avoid at all costs the comedy calendar. I must highlight in this regard the *"All I need to know about life I learnt from my pig"* calendar. It features a different

porker in chortlesome pose for each month of the year, but the hilarious pig-related truisms, while side-splitting as you rifle the pages on first receiving the calen-

dar, will be jaded by the time their month comes round. A phrase like, "Keep your snout to the wheel and your tail to the wind," for example, could ruin the whole of July.

But you do not want to think of July just yet, that is the problem. You do not want to flick to the beach pictures in the middle of a year through which you have not yet adequately ploughed to earn the holiday they connote.

If anything, you might want to invest in a truly useful calendar, such as the *Amateur Gardening* effort (£4.95 and already reduced to £2.95 in John Lewis). Here you have genuinely useable stuff diffused in a chronologically efficient

way: "March: commence vegetable seed sowing of peas, broad beans and parsnips. Use cloches for extra protection... August: herbs will shortly require drying for winter use." Fantastic.

But do not buy any novelty golf calendars. Perhaps the worst is the *Most Difficult Golf Holes in the World* monstrosity. It consists of photographs of greens superimposed on Himalayan cliff faces. If you have already been given one of these, get some new relatives.

Heritage calendars are equally grim, such as *Reflections of Britain* and *London Calendar* (both still £3.45). These feature places that do not really exist, and make you yearn for one which shows Kentish Town Road in the rush hour, or the Winchester Bypass at night. Your own life should not be

less beautiful than your calendar. There is a plethora of "Impressionist" calendars (do they represent, perhaps, not the order of days as they really are, but as they seem to be to the artist?). There are recipe calendars, like *The Chocoholics' Gourmet Calendar*, if you want to hit January 1998 a different shape from January 1997, and *The Cartoonists*, if you want to go mad. A cartoon for April with the caption "He's outside, toilet-training the dog" will not seem quite so hilarious after a month on the wall as it does now.

Which is true of pretty much everything they put on calendars. So forget it. Don't make the stationers rich. You are going to have to live 1997, which is bad enough. You don't have to measure it on a wall-hanging as well.

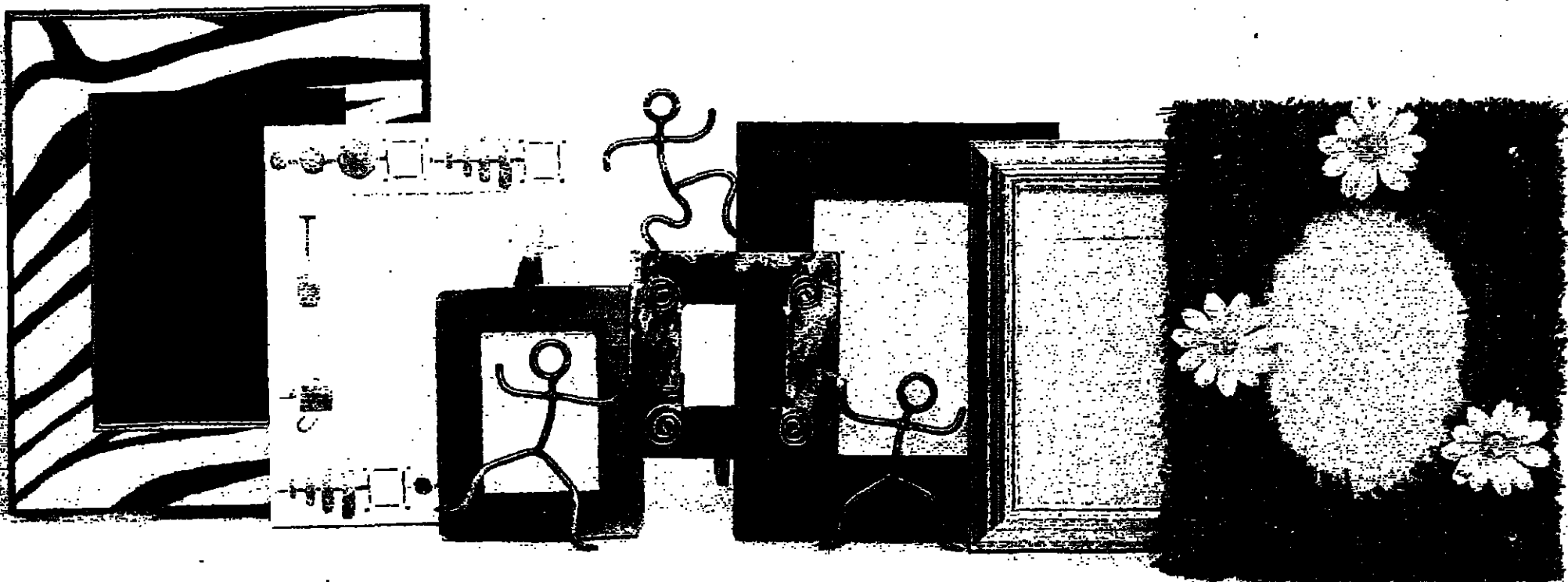
DES JENSON

SERIOUS SHOPPING

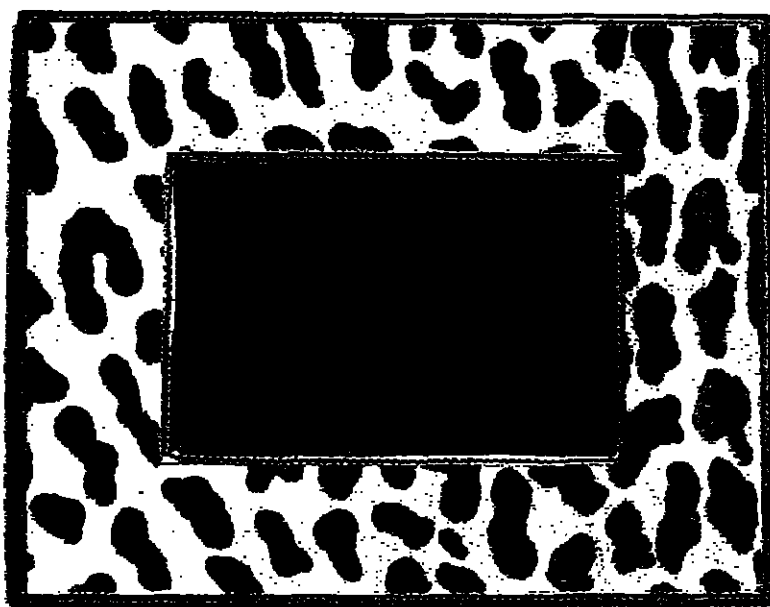
CALENDARS



BY GILES COREN

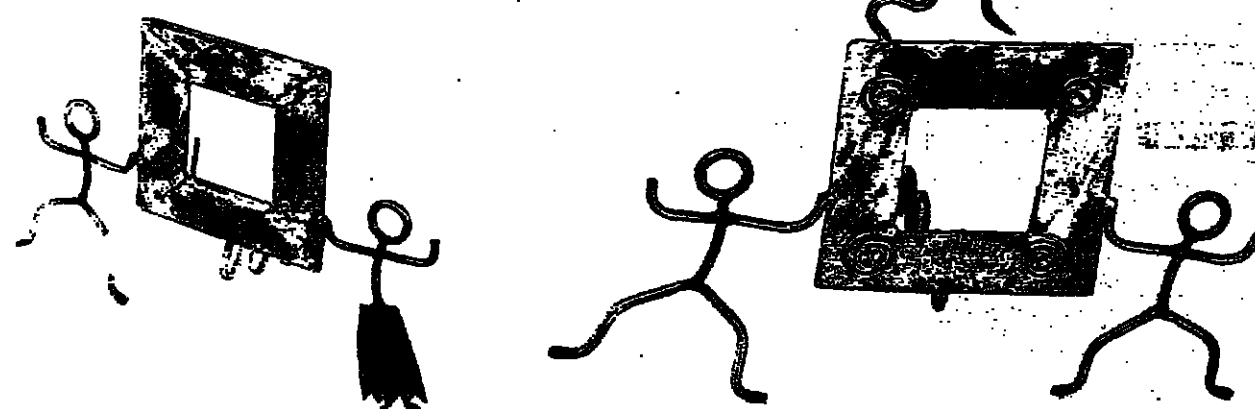


Picture the hippest style for squares



PICTURE frames can be a cheerful way to experiment with the latest luminous colours and animal prints or to add humour to the family portrait. It does not matter that they may never become family heirlooms — alongside your staid silver frames on the mantelpiece they will add a little light relief.

SUDI PIGOTT looks at some of the snappiest frames around.



ABOVE (from left): "Ooh" picture frame in bright orange fur, £17.50, from Romer, 258 Archway Road, London N6; zebra-striped cowhide frame, £170, from Gucci, 33 Bond Street, W1 (0171-499 1081); handpainted wooden frame with garden motifs by Anne Taylor, £18.95, from Lizzie's, 143 Northcote Road, SW11 (0171-738 2973); small resin frame in aqua, £12.50, from Heal's, 196 Tottenham Court Road, W1 (0171-638 1686); wrought-iron frames featuring stick people, £8.99-£12.99, for Disaster Design (stockists, 01323 441444); classic wooden frame in blue or green, £15.95, from Heal's (as before); gold leaf-effect frame, £8.95, from John Lewis, Oxford Street, W1 (0171-629 7711) and branches nationwide; "Grow" frame in astroturf with daisies, £18.50, from Romer (as before).

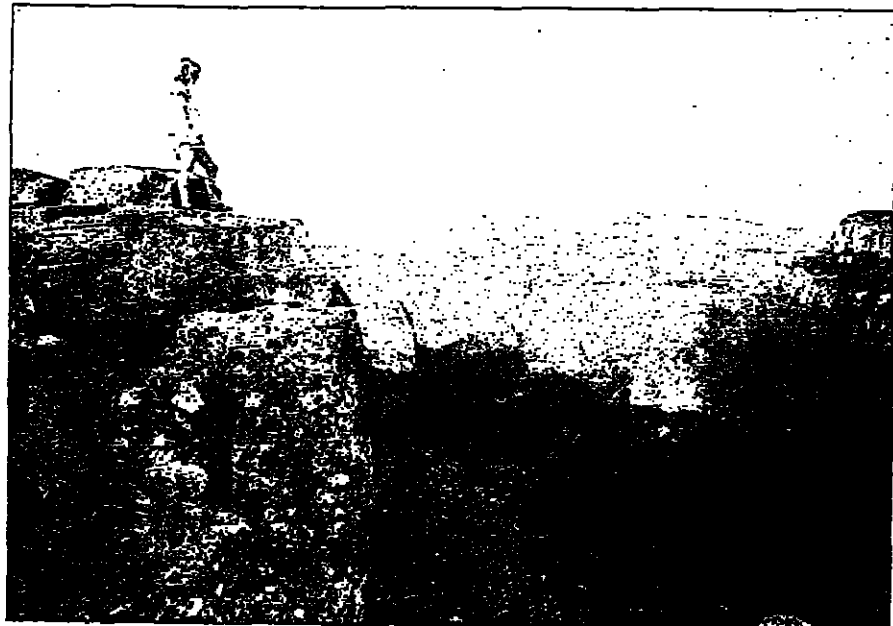
FAR LEFT: leopard-spotted cowhide frame, £150, from Gucci (as before).

LEFT: Disaster Design wrought-iron frames (as before).

'The trend is to escape the crowds'

IN AND OUT

■ Still in for 1997: Egypt, Syria and Jordan.
■ Newly in for 1997: China, especially Yunnan, Peking and Shanghai Xian; Latin America: The Yucatan.
■ Do go to Albania, Romania or Poland.
■ Don't go to Prague — you're a decade too late.
■ Do go to St Bart's, Barbados, Nevis or Anguilla.
■ Don't go to Antigua.
■ Do try Kerala, especially Cochin and Varanasi.
■ Don't go to Goa: been there, done that.
■ Do get a taste of Namibia's South Africa — but go to Cape Town, not Johannesburg. Or try Zanzibar, Botswana, Malawi, Namibia or Zimbabwe.
■ Don't go to Kenya.
■ Do try the third generation TGV Duplex and travel at 270 kmh on the double-decker between Paris and Lyon.



The Blyde River Canyon in South Africa, which is good value for British tourists

ULTRA SMART

■ Africa: Singita Game reserve in South Africa: elephant safaris in Zimbabwe and Botswana.
■ Far East: Saman Villas — probably the most exquisite new beach hotel in Sri Lanka. Oberoi in Lombok — an easier place to escape to than Moyo Island which is east of there.
■ Caribbean: Guana Island — puts Necker in the shade.
■ India: Nilaya Hermitage, Goa — the first luxury retreat in the subcontinent, with only eight rooms. Maharajah of Jodhpur's Royal Camp — the ultimate way to avoid other tourists.
■ Europe: Hacienda San Rafael (south of Seville); Château de Baginols near Lyon — probably the best castle in Europe.
Sources: Bruce Palling, Western and Oriental Travel, 0171-221-9877; Alison Eggleston, Abercrombie & Kent, 0171-730-9600.

TOP SELLERS

WINTER 96/97

Canaries
Mainland Spain
USA
Caribbean
Majorca
Portugal
Tunisia
India
Egypt
Far East

SUMMER 1997

Baleares
Greek Islands
Mainland Spain
Canaries
Turkey
USA
Portugal
Caribbean
Cyprus
Italy

ON THE UP

Mexico
Dominican Republic
Egypt
France
Greece
Morocco

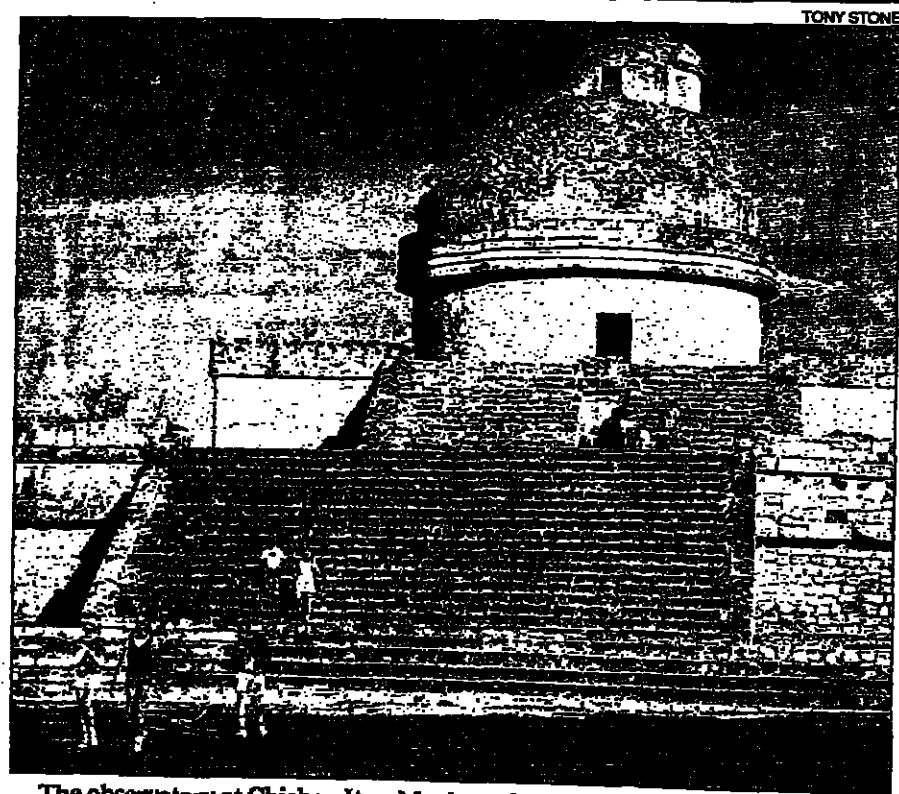
Source: Thomson

and farmhouses in the Pyrenees or to such areas as Gaudin or Alpujarras in Andalusia for walking and riding, cookery or painting holidays. Aware meanwhile of the inhibiting image of the Costa del Sol, the authorities are steadily blowing up most of the eyesores on the coast.

Another smash hit last summer was Italy where the British benefited from the weak lira. Its popularity, reflecting the enthusiasm in

Britain for all things Italian, will continue in 1997. Greece, which will be more competitively priced in 1997, is set to recover from a disappointing summer last year and operators report that the Algarve is back in fashion, as are Malta and Tunisia. The boom in Turkish holidays seems unstoppable and summer bookings are already up by 40 per cent on last year. Enjoy your holidays wherever you go.

THE BACKPACKERS' TOP TEN



The observatory at Chichen Itza, Mexico, which is a hot destination for 1997

Guatemala: one of Latin America's most colourful countries, Guatemala is cultural, chaotic and full of character. Ascend to the beautiful highland region to discover verdant hills, volcanoes, lakes and Mayan ruins; or descend into the dense rainforest jungle and be consumed within the steep-sided pyramids of the Tikal temple complex. £488.

Zanzibar: stunning palm-fringed beaches, crystal blue sea, coral reefs coupled with a laid-back atmosphere. £518.

Trans-Siberian Railway: 7,000 miles in seven days, the Trans-Siberian railway from Moscow to Peking is the epic adventure for trendy transpotters. Watch the Mongolian tundra, Manchuria steppes and the "Old Silk" route through Uzbekistan's desert chug past your window. £295 one way.

United Arab Emirates: red deserts where the nomadic Bedu people wander, green oases and blue seas for buddies to dive with the dolphins. £325.

Kazakhstan: rugged beauty in abundance and adventure awaits any trekker among the ice-peaked mountains, deep forested valleys and wild rivers of Zailiysky and Kungey Alatau mountains. £594.

Alaska: the Last Frontier — glaciers the size of Switzerland, enormous ice fields, deep fjords, active volcanoes and lush rainforests. £541.

Tallin: founded in the 13th century, the architecture and ambience of this port city was shaped by the Russians, Swedes and Germans. £252.

Reykjavik: northernmost capital city, brightly painted wooden buildings, pollution-free fresh air and tempting seafood restaurants. £288.

Ethiopia: the country is emerging as an attractive African option. Head into the interior to find ancient cities like Axum, extraordinary churches carved from rock at Lalibela or amazing wildlife in the plains. £570.

Laos: it leaves Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia standing. Hire a bicycle and explore the capital, Vientiane, on the banks of the Mekong River, or travel to the enchanting former royal city of Luang Prabang in the north, surrounded by mountains encompassing 32 Buddhist temples. £540.

Source: STA Travel, 0171-361 6262; all prices for return flights.

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The art of picking up a smart bargain

Advertised as "bumper bonanzas" with "unmissable reductions", the winter sales are heaven for shopaholics. But remember that they are not organised as an exercise in goodwill to customers; the shopkeepers are simply trying to shift stock they have been unable to sell.

A fantastic price-cut can pump the adrenalin and cloud your judgment. Sometimes, even though a piece is bright fuchsia Lurex, three sizes too small and will not go with anything else in your wardrobe, you can kid yourself it is a bargain. When sales shopping, think back to the disasters you have bought in the past. And remember that when a £1,000 dress is down to only £400, you have still spent £400. Treat the sales as you would normal shopping: if you like something and it is the right price, buy it. Do not be swayed by a big reduction.

To prepare yourself for sale shopping, you need a sturdy shoulder bag and what my mother would call "sensible" shoes. Also, take another look at what you already have so that you can colour co-ordinate your bargains. Forget Prada-style mis-matching — that was last year's fad.

Good buys can generally be found in tailoring, where you often discover that jackets, skirts and trousers are sold as separates, which is good for the pear-shaped, petite and tall. However, if you cannot find the size you want, add the rough cost of an alteration, say £10-£15, and then reassess.

Coats seem to be a good buy, though the more timeless classics have smaller reductions. For dresses, buy strappy evening numbers that can double as day dresses in summer. Designer evening labels at department stores are good value because the reductions tend to be large.

For added glamour, root out bias-cut examples, like the dress shown bottom right, making sure that they are a good fit, because alterations here can be tricky and expensive.

Things to avoid include cheap fashion-fad items in colours and styles that obviously date. However, the acid brights of the summer may just bring you through to next year, and chocolate tones will be here for a while. But steer clear of cheap black nylon.

Styles and silhouettes to look out for are one-shoulder tops, asymmetric hemlines, lace, pretty florals and frills.

Happy shopping, and keep a level head in the scrum.

Heath Brown offers the intelligent fashion shopper's guide to the sales: what's a snip, what's a must-buy and what to avoid despite the big reduction



ABOVE: Black-and-white snowball jacket with black fur trim collar, was £2,799 now £679; matching skirt, was £799 now £179, John Galiano, Harrods, Knightsbridge, SW1 (0171-730 1234). Black, fine strappy sandals, were £49.99 now £10, Ravel, 184-186 Oxford Street, London W1, 58 the Arndale Centre, Manchester, and branches nationwide (0171-631 0224)

RIGHT: Chocolate-brown strappy satin dress, was £579 now £299, Pearce Florida, Harrods (as above). Cream, fine strappy sandals, were £49.99 now £10, Ravel (as above)



ABOVE: Lime green bouclé coat, was £109 now £89.99, Oasis, selected branches nationwide (0171-452 1000). Grey stripe cashmere sweater, was £299 now £149.50, Betty Jackson, 311 Brompton Road, London SW7 (0171-589 7884). Aubergine wool gaberdine knee-length skirt, was £89 now £39, Nicole Farhi at Fenwicks, Bond Street, W1 (0171-243 9900). Brown leather shopper bag, was £189 now £94.50, Jane Shilton, Harrods, SW1 (0171-730 1234). All photographs: Richard Burns. Hair and make-up: Selby Kvalheim. Styling: Amandip Uppal

THREE OF A KIND

Chenille, the soft, plush, corded knit that is more than velvet but less than fake fur, is the perfect comfort clothing to wrap up in with style H.B.



Tattoo roll-neck sweater, £239, Betty Jackson, 311 Brompton Road, London SW3 (0171-589 7884)

Midnight blue silver-studded V-neck, £54, French Connection, branches nationwide (0171-580 2507)

Lime zip-front cardigan, £19.99, Oasis, 292 Regent Street, W1, and branches nationwide (0171-452 1000)



Contemplation.

Besides being one of the most enduring of life's little pleasures, Gloag's Gin is an ever-dependable complement to contemplation. Whilst the discerning fellow marshals his thoughts, he can ponder over its smooth yet crisp character and the fragrant aroma of eleven herbs and botanicals.

The Classic GIN.

GLOAG'S



GARDEN ANSWERS

STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q I have grown two bird of paradise plants, *Strelitzia reginae*, from seed in the hope of getting them to flower. They are four years old, 3ft high and in 12in pots. They are fed and watered weekly with Tomorite, and stood outside from May to August. One is healthy, but the other produces leaves which turn brown beneath and eventually yellow. — E. French, Warrington, Cheshire.

A *Strelitzias* like to be pot-bound, and in that condition they will sometimes flower in five years from seed, given sufficient light. I suspect you have two problems. First, you have potted them on too soon, so the roots are kept constantly too moist. Second, you may be overfeeding with potash-rich food. Keep the plants quite dry during the winter, and do not feed again until you see vigorous growth and new leaves next year. When you start to water again regularly, in spring, give the poorer plant a dose of systemic fungicide. Check that the soil level is not above the root/stem junction; *strelitzias* like to hoist themselves an inch or two above the compost so drainage is really sharp at the neck.

Q We have a 20ft holly which berries well but the top third has become short of leaf. Can we safely cut the trunk off where it starts to get thin, or is there a way of making the top thicken up again? — C. Woods, Oxford.

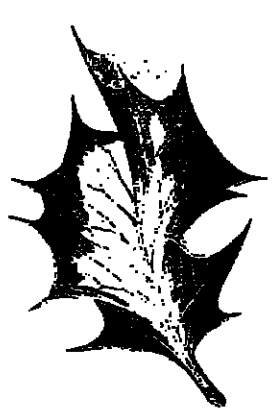
A Hollies are long-lived trees, and can reach as much as 40ft in 150 years. As they start to die of old age, they will become thin and then die back. It is perfectly possible to cut back old hollies but it is always more successful to cut them off at ground level in the winter. Growth will be back up to 6ft in a couple of years. Cutting back to standing trunks always

leads to further die-back later, and it is much safer to cut at ground level. Your holly is too young to be senescent. It may have been damaged to the trunk at high level, in which case cut off the trunk just below the damage and let it regrow. Or it may be a root problem such as waterlogging, which must be rectified by mechanical means.

Q I have had a hibiscus for several years but it will not flower. I have cut it back but not fed it too much. How do I get it to flower? — L.H. Kensell, New Cross, London.

A The large-flowered *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* is not hardy and cannot be planted out, although in a good summer it can be stood outdoors in full sun. Your hibiscus is in need of more food and especially more light. Keep it on the dry side for the winter. Next spring, start a fortnightly programme of liquid feeding, and give it as much light as possible, in a conservatory or greenhouse. It should not go below 13°C. Pinch it back to keep it bushy, rather than cutting back every couple of years.

Readers should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. It may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times also regrets that any enclosures cannot be returned.



Holly can be cut back

Jane Owen finds a low-maintenance garden with a lush English feel, yet it needs hardly any watering

Plants that look after themselves



Full of good ideas: Dominic Cole

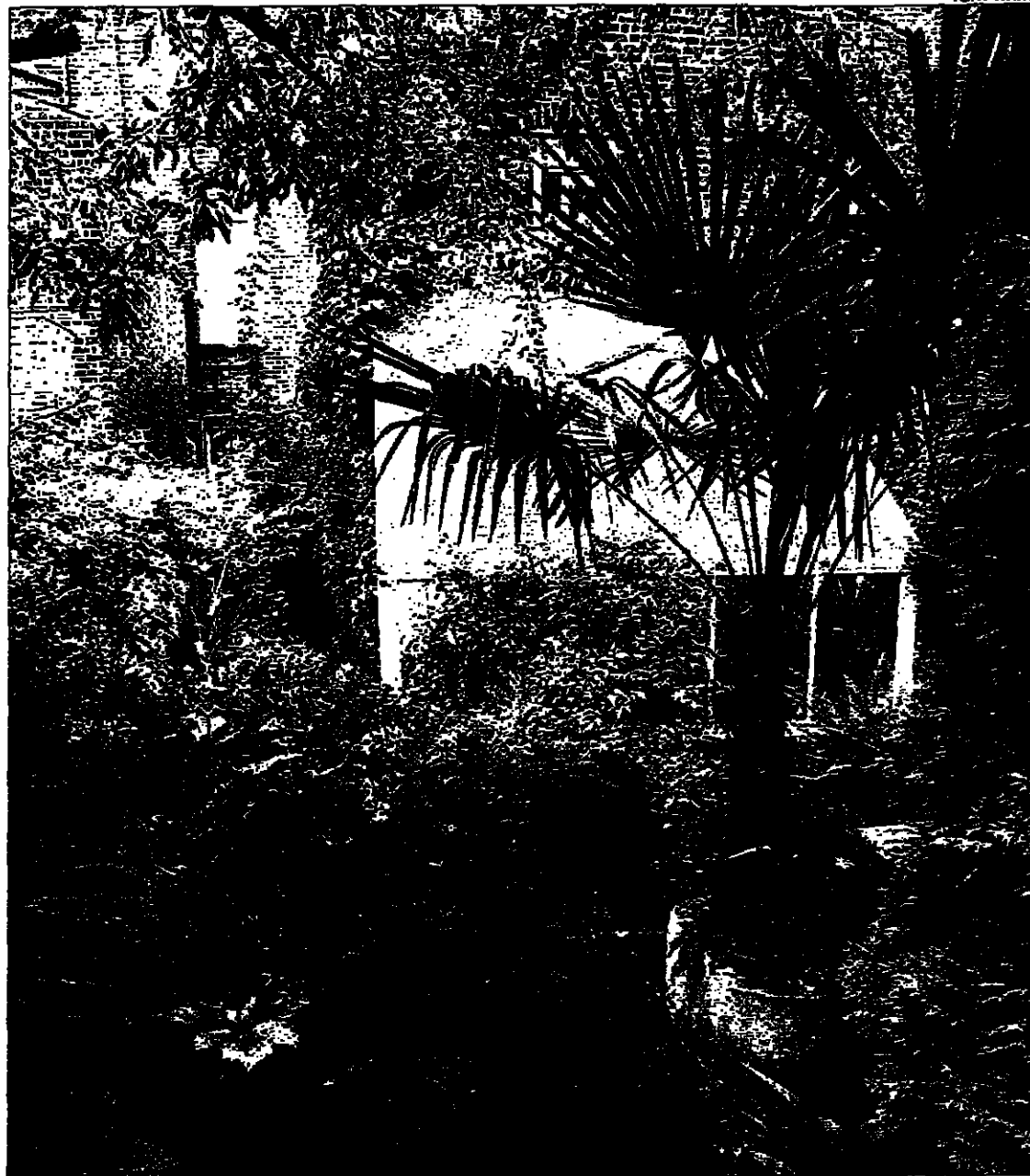
Dominic Cole watered his garden only once this year, and he reckons that was in a moment of foolhardy extravagance, because the garden is planted to look after itself. Half an hour's maintenance a week is about what it needs, and most of that time is spent lopping back certain plants to let others breathe and grow.

It is eight years since Mr Cole bought his flat in north London and its 70ft by 13ft garden, which was then mainly paved with concrete slabs with a rubbish heap at one end. The cost of the garden has been about £700. That includes rebuilding parts of his perimeter walls and adding trellis, with "gossip gaps" through which he can chat to his neighbours.

Low-maintenance gardens which require little or no watering usually have a Mediterranean feel created by drought-resistant architectural plants and weed-suppressing membrane concealed under pebbles or scree. This garden is quite different. During the spring and summer it has the feel of a lush English country garden, which is all the more surprising because it is squeezed between an early Victorian terrace of houses fronting on to an arterial route into London and the crescent that housed the murderous Dr Crippen.

After work and at weekends, Mr Cole took up a lot of the paving and sorted what was left into useful soil, genuine rubbish for the dump, and bricks and fragments of York stone pavers to make two terraces, one at the far end of the garden and one in the centre. This overlooked a small pond and bog garden that he dug and lined with heavy-grade polythene from a builders' merchant.

The bog garden was made by dropping a semi-circle of soil-filled terracotta pots into a corner of the

Dominic Cole's garden, with the impressive *Trachycarpus fortunei* palm in its chimney pot, right

pond and filling the remaining space in the corner with soil, meadow sweet, arum lilies and water buttercup. Frogs appeared of their own volition and, with them, water snails and water boatmen.

A chimney pot, rescued from the brink of destruction by enthusiastic builders, makes a home for an impressive palm, *Trachycarpus fortunei*, which is left out all winter.

"It doesn't like cold wind, so if one looks likely I tie the leaves together with rope. But I leave it to its own devices most winters," says Mr Cole, a landscape architect who works for a landscape restoration company.

At the far end of the garden, behind a shed, is the compost area. The active heap is topped by a once-fine Persian rug that had suffered moth attack. The compost is responsible for

Mr Cole's enviable watering record. He uses it as a mulch and as a terrific start when he plants roses and shrubs.

The structure of the garden comes from the shrubs: a standard holly grown from a 2in seedling, the exotic-looking blue-flowered *Abutilon vitifolium*, lavender, balls of box and an old apple tree. This is now weighed down with the pale pink, scented, early-flowering *Clematis armandii* 'Apple Blossom' and the montana 'Elizabeth', the conifer *Chamaecyparis 'Elwoodii'*, which is a pillar of evergreen, and a *Prunus subhirtella 'Autumnalis'*.

But the atmosphere of the garden comes from the riot of wild flowers, or flowers that happily self-seed: orange Welsh poppies; the 4ft high, gracefully arching grass *Carex pendula*;

exclamation marks of *Verbascum bombyciferum*, with its soft grey leaves and yellow flowers; the graceful white blooms of arum lilies, which will grow in dry as well as wet; and a gunnera, which is grown in the dry to keep it small. There is also lamium, hedgerow honeysuckle (the cultivated version of this is 'Graham Thomas'), scabious, hawkweed and herb robert, which sprout out of every crack in the paving. Mr Cole chiselled out the mortar between the old paving and rubbed the wild flower seed in to get this effect.

In spring, the unusual *Libertia bioides* adds spikes of sisyrinchium-like flowers to its fountain of leaves.

From inside Mr Cole's kitchen/dining room, a sort of conservatory makes the garden seem part of the house. Through a thicket of trifid-

WEEKEND TIPS

- Make 12in hardwood cuttings of roses, setting them two-thirds underground in a trench in a shady place. Transplant to their final positions next autumn.
- Ventilate greenhouses as much as outdoor temperatures will allow, to reduce the onset of fungal diseases.
- Prune gooseberries and black, red and white currants, according to their different requirements.
- Check over shears, lawn-mowers and power equipment, and get any servicing done before the spring rush. Start up petrol engines periodically through the winter.
- Place seed orders — and resolve not to buy seed of vegetables which always crop just as you go away on your summer holiday.

like house plants the garden proper is visible: a cascade of grass-like leaves mark the place where, in spring, *Iris stylosa* produces its elegant little heads; a huge, red-flowered chaenactis, cut back every August, flowers from Christmas for about two months.

In a space about 2ft wide along one side of the conservatory is an area most people would have ignored. Mr Cole, however, has managed to plant a voluptuous selection of ferns and ivy for year-round greenery, and Japanese anemones, which seed freely on London's heavy clay.

On the other side of the house, in a passage leading down to the French windows of the sitting room, is a marble stand on which Mr Cole does his cuttings. Beside it are pots of white-flowered nicotiana; the small, grey-leaved pelargonium 'Lady Penzance'; lily of the valley, mind-your-own-business and even a Christmas rose.

An intense, incense-like smell in this area came from the leaves of *Cistus ladanifer*. Alongside the pots, in a narrow bed with a meagre 2in of soil, the fern polypody thrives and, close by, the curious pink spikes of the saprophytic plant which grows on the roots of ivy stand to attention.

Like all dedicated gardeners, Mr Cole spends almost nothing on plants; they come as gifts or swaps. While it may not suit traditionalists and lovers of primed lawns and well-dug, weed-free beds, this style is a future for gardening: appropriate planting, nurturing plants that enjoy growing in a given spot instead of trying always to triumph over nature.

It manages to be an extremely English compromise for a very English garden.

■ Dominic Cole will sometimes show his garden to enthusiasts if they write to 42 Brecknock Road, London N7.

ACROSS

- 1 Sign about new pack offering individualised food (7)
- 5 Times is taken by English liberal, for instance (7)
- 9 Trivial demonstration taking everyone in (7)
- 15 Settle matters by going over the top and risk being hit by shell fragments (3,1,2,2,5,1,3)
- 16 No deposit can be returned, having accepted present at that point (9)
- 17 Get ready for brewing ale in advance (7)
- 18 Story of a bishop being eaten by aborigine? (9)
- 19 Always getting a century for northern eleven (7)
- 21 One who's achieved great success through skillful man-management (11)
- 23 Passion giving Cockney difficult time (6)
- 24 Like extremely hellish region with man in terrible torments (10)
- 26 Place with female leader in Bible, at the end of Arabia (5)
- 28 A pest's destructively eating little plants in the garden (5,4)
- 31 Rock: nothing about on fruit tree (6)
- 33 Storm has disrupted a party (7)
- 35 Thrash beginning in evening, going on late (5)
- 37 Bank hasn't opened, in light of warning (5)
- 40 Worker is freedom fighter without a leader (7)
- 41 Warning, by the way, this figure's regularly around (11,8)
- 44 One who's contrived caring role re patient? (7,12)
- 46 Entourage gathering round Queen in the country (7)
- 49 Hair loss from anxiety initially (5)
- 49 Ruddy-brown monkeys about to grab one (5)
- 51 Shout from one fencing part of kitchen garden (2,5)
- 53 Friendly good companion joining mother after first male's gone (6)
- 54 Heating or cooling devices (9)
- 57 Governor gets through printed document (5)
- 59 Firm line guy ordered to restrict noise (10)
- 62 Graze in furrow (6)
- 64 Firm to stop making tool component (8,3)
- 68 Seasoning something like a rabbit's taken about a month (7)
- 70 Once again pay attention to Sarah in run-through (9)
- 71 Enliven an initially indifferent companion (7)
- 73 Is it a chop that's destroyed this tree? (4)
- 75 Introducing a male division on account of a hard task? (7,3,3,4,3,4)
- 76 Absorb too much and get too hot (7)
- 77 Festival name appropriate to Asian lands (7)
- 78 Play about bit left out (7)

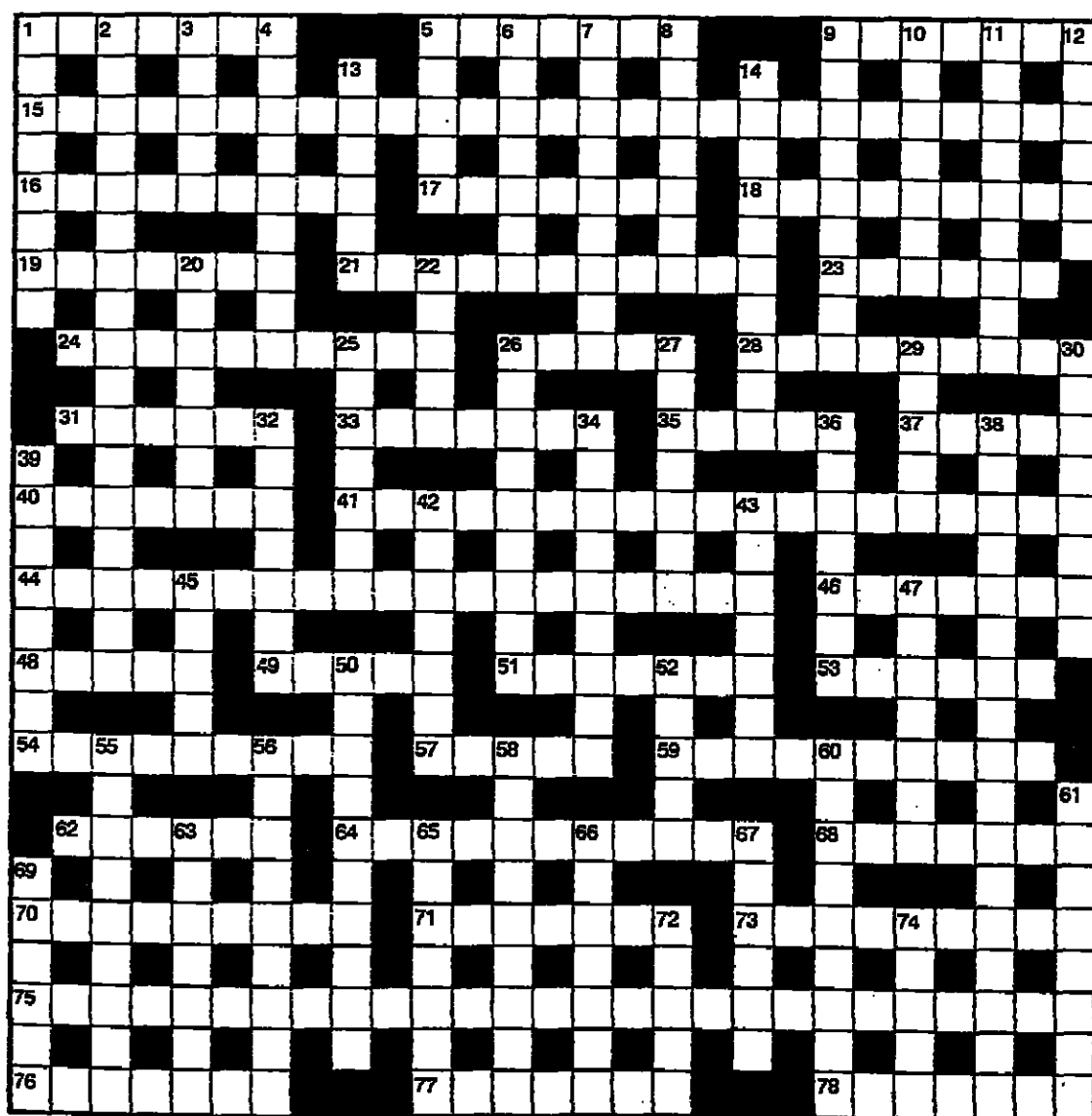
DOWN

- 1 One attached to circle, in short, associated with monarch (8)
- 2 The most noteworthy bit of Paris (5,2,10)
- 3 Man, perhaps, buried under a passage (9)
- 4 Surprise you once had in English sportsman coming in first (3-6)
- 5 See the rain — but with some clearance there's clear sky (5)
- 6 One can identify the captain in a jolly crew (7)
- 7 Assume head can absorb drink served up (9)
- 8 Heart, not head, involved in petition (7)
- 9 Flight where you'll see famous actor carrying one item of luggage (9)
- 10 Bother some power-cut in one part of town (7)
- 11 Number of degrees in Geography? Oxford has more than Cambridge (8)
- 12 Blight on the side of King Edward (6)
- 13 Say what's for preprandial beating up? A concoction for drinking (6)
- 14 Actress in Shakespearean lead evicted those summarising plays (10)
- 15 Casual clothes, not suitable for dinner, we hear? (1-6)
- 22 Plant behind when deprived of nitrogen (5)
- 25 Section of spout we arranged for exhaust (7)
- 26 Unimportant being second? (5-8)
- 27 Drug one rascal brought up in a tin (7)
- 29 Crown one seized in place of Irish king (5)
- 30 Police officer pronounced an expert with baton (8)
- 32 Confuse leaders of nations plainly lacking in common sense (7)
- 34 Ship's beam inaccurate — needing precision, we hear (9)
- 36 Capricious fellow harbouring deserter (7)
- 38 Game fellow asking for aid — one I, of good Samaritan, should help (6,2,6)
- 39 Girl sees changing of the guard (8)
- 42 Release grip of snake after relative comes to premature end (7)
- 43 Crook nearly caught stealing (7)
- 45 One emperor upset follower of another (5)
- 47 Simply overestimate number in gathering (5,2)
- 50 Englishman gathers stray bullets after battle (4-6)
- 52 Journey from Waterloo, heading East (5)
- 55 Glomms hero's out to become unexpected success (4,5)
- 56 Carelessness in supervision (9)
- 58 Writer on river craft on the rocks (9)
- 60 Interpreter's English baffled six top soldiers (9)
- 61 First person in Lourdes to welcome a troubled soul, one blind (8)
- 63 Cupidity — a wicked habit for a king to get into (7)
- 65 Make one's home outside a US city (7)
- 66 With unequal sides ranking first and second in netball (7)
- 67 Arrange scheme to support the lower classes (8)
- 69 Speedy Lanes soccer team failing to finish (6)
- 72 Topsis female talk into rising river (5)
- 74 Sailor takes each maiden across the ship (5)

NEW YEAR JUMBO CROSSWORD



Win a methuselah of Moët & Chandon champagne and £100 in our quiz. Five runners-up will receive £100. Entries, by January 13, to: New Year Jumbo Crossword, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Solution on January 18



NAME _____ ADDRESS _____ POSTCODE _____

Times Two New Year Holiday Crossword

There are no prizes for this crossword. The answers will be published on Monday, December 30

ACROSS

- 1 Polluter (7)
- 5 Surgeon's knife (7)
- 9 Setback (after recovery) (7)
- 15 All my nut-tree would bear (1,6,6,3,1,6,4)
- 16 Place for legal advice (3,6)
- 17 Pouched-beak bird (7)
- 18 Issuing (from) (9)
- 19 A substitute (5-2)
- 21 Evocative of the air (11)
- 23 Compression engine (6)
- 24 Reconsider (5,5)
- 26 Appears; appearance (5)
- 28 Great European painting (3,6)
- 31 Triumvirate (6)
- 33 Car frame (7)
- 35 Desert waterhole (5)
- 37 Swimming style; go slowly (7)
- 40 Hitter; one not working (7)
- 41 As it were (2,1,6,2,8)
- 44 Naval rank (10,9)
- 46 Ointment (7)
- 48 Sorted reference list (5)
- 49 Take-away (sign) (5)
- 51 Fragment (7)
- 53 Too thin (person) (6)
- 54 Thick round fillet cut (9)
- 57 Right-hand (page) (5)
- 59 Resistance (10)
- 62 Lowest parts (6)
- 64 Circumlocution (11)
- 68 Shorten (text) (7)
- 70 Loudening device (9)
- 71 Went round the edges of (7)
- 73 One growing in orchard (5,4)
- 75 "I met —" (Ozymandias) (1,9,4,2,7,4)
- 76 Final consumer (5,4)
- 77 Portable light (7)
- 78 Biaggerated (7)

DOWN

- 1 A write-off (4,4)
- 2 One unhelpful in trouble (4-7,6)
- 3 Embankment; royal reception (5)
- 4 Zenda country (Hope) (9)
- 5 (Judge) summarise (3,2)
- 6 Prayer bell (7)
- 7 Wooden puppet, Disney film (9)
- 8 Student (7)
- 9 (Caught) in the act (3-6)
- 10 Pedigree (7)
- 11 Head of republic (9)
- 12 Anger very much (6)
- 13 Got it (Archimedes) (6)
- 14 Chance on; be understood (4,6)
- 20 1940 evacuation port (7)
- 22 A craze (5)
- 25 Sell to highest bidder (7)
- 26 Grand Canary port (3,6)
- 27 Searched hard; rubbed (7)
- 29 Ghana capital (5)
- 30 Demote (8)
- 32 Word formed of initials (7)
- 34 Smallest Europe republic (3,6)
- 36 Wren's cathedral (2,5)
- 38 Fantastical (after Carroll) (5-2,10)
- 39 King David, as author (8)
- 42 One bringing charges (7)
- 43 Front-mast platform (naut.) (7)
- 45 One from Dallas (5)
- 47 Glamour, sparkle (7)
- 50 Busybody (4,6)
- 52 Devout (5)
- 55 Still valid (9)
- 56 Whisky manufacturer (9)
- 58 Goat star-sign (9)
- 60 Current situation (6,3)
- 61 Protected (8)
- 63 Robbers (7)
- 65 Calming (7)
- 66 The daily struggle (3,4)
- 67 Freedom from danger (6)
- 69 Royal residence (6)
- 72 Exhaust; outflow pipe (5)
- 74 Subject, modif (5)

Yes. we grow some banana

The experts

150

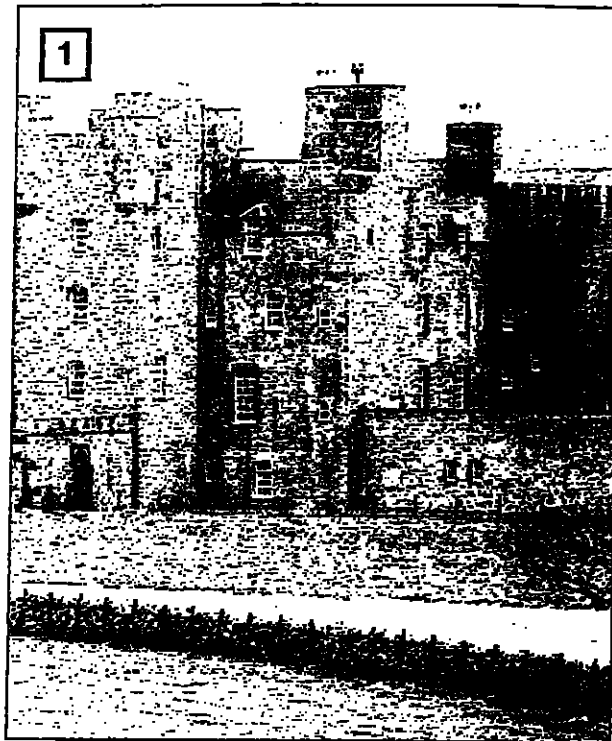
Put the people and places to the property in our new year quiz and you could win a stay at a health resort

QA

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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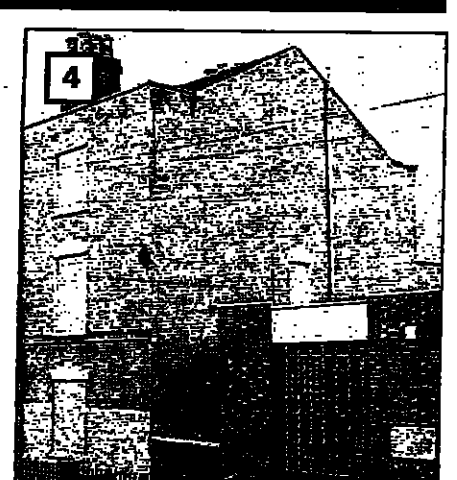
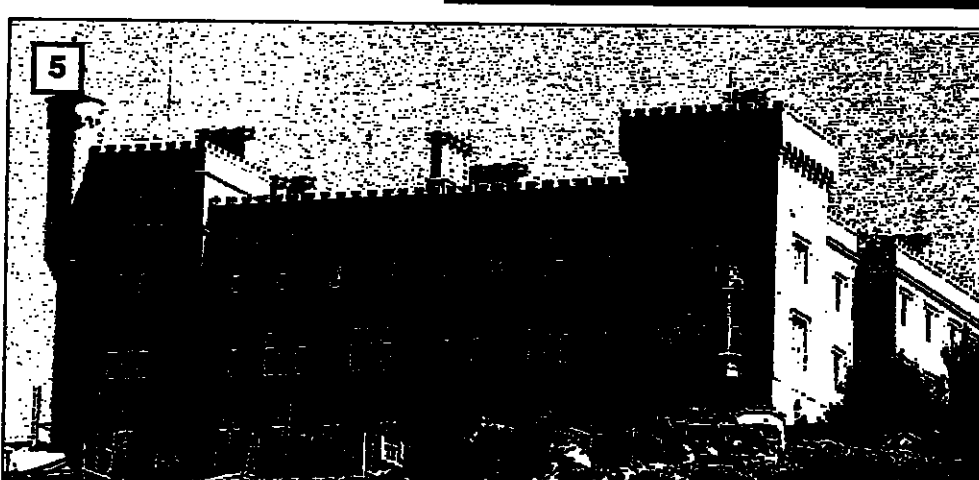
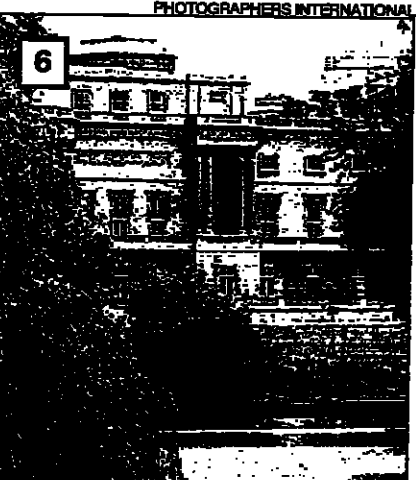
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THE PHOTOGRAPHS numbered 1 to 8 illustrate property stories that have been in the news in 1996. The object of the quiz is to guess the person or place each photograph relates to, using the clues (see right). The reader with the correct answers selected from the postbag on January 3, 1997, will win an all-inclusive two-night stay at Champneys health resort in Tring, Hertfordshire, worth up to £600. The "New Year, New You" package can be taken at any time until February 28, 1997 (subject to availability). Normal Times competition rules apply. Send your entries to Property Quiz, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Solution on January 11. CHERYL TAYLOR



- ### QUIZ CLUES
- 1 This much loved grandmother saved the castle for charity.
 - 2 Which Essex girl was fined for changing her historic home?
 - 3 Unlikely terrorist target in the first division.
 - 4 This man's house of horror is wiped off the map.
 - 5 Fitzzy "double" troubled by builders' rubble on Channel Island hideaway.
 - 6 Sly intruder puts one's wildlife in a flap at this residence.
 - 7 This star-crossed couple play a game of musical houses.
 - 8 The new watering hole for this raucous popstar.



FOR SALE

AROUND £925,000

£900,000

IRELAND: Ardara, Navan, Co. Meath. 18th-century Palladian mansion in 120 acres of parkland. Eight bedrooms, six bathrooms (three en suite), day and night nurseries, four reception rooms, study, kitchen, domestic offices and staff flat. East Pavilion with four rooms. West Pavilion: self-contained four-bedroom staff/guest accommodation. Entrance lodge and farm buildings. About £900,000 (Knight Frank, 01488 692726).

£950,000

HAMPSHIRE: Home Lodge, Chichester. Grade II listed 18th-century country house on eight acres of formal gardens, walled kitchen garden, woods and paddocks. Six bedrooms, four bathrooms (two en suite), gallery, hall, three reception rooms, library, kitchen/breakfast room and domestic offices. Swimming pool, tennis courts. About £950,000 (Knight Frank, 01488 692726).

£930,000

CASA BERTI, Gugliano, Lucca, Tuscany. Restored country house in 17 acres of woodland and olive groves, in the hills above Lucca. Five bedrooms, four bathrooms (one en suite), sitting room, drawing room, dining room/billiard room, kitchen/breakfast room. Farmhouse providing staff and guest accommodation. Studio, swimming pool, chapel and terraced gardens. About £930,000 (Knight Frank 0171-629 8171).

CHERYL TAYLOR

Create a cracking good design

Louisa Young explains how a few pieces of broken tile can be turned into a beautiful mosaic

Mosaic is easy. I do it with my three-year-old, and her efforts are generally better than mine. Like cooking, it is easier to learn by watching and doing than by following a recipe. However, because the cost of equipment can add up, and because you may be unsure whether you will take it to a good way to start is to take an evening class. Then, if you get the mosaic buzz, you can buy all the things you will need, including *The Mosaic Book* by Peggy Vance and Celia Goodrick-Clarke (Conran, October, £16.99), which gives step-by-step instructions, design ideas and plenty of inspiration.

The simplest mosaic method is to spread grout all over a base and then push broken crockery into it. But if you want a more professional finish, try the indirect method. It is called indirect because you create the design upside-down on paper, to get a smooth surface, then spend it onto its base.

Let's start with a tile (later you can work up to fireplace surrounds, bathroom floors and grottos).

You will need:

- Mosaic tiles
- Grout (Unibond all-purpose waterproof is good)
- Brown paper
- Stanley knife
- Small flexible grout knife
- Paper gum

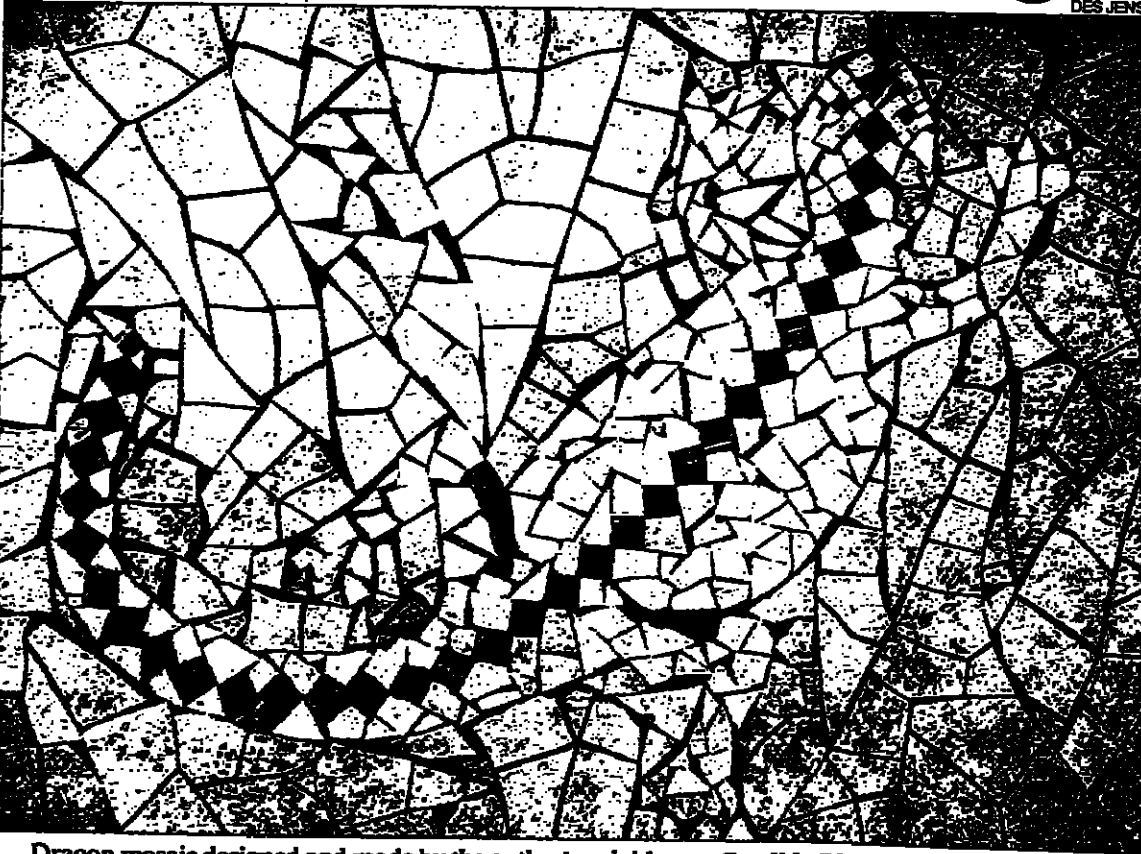
Two pieces of hardboard: one of them the size you want your mosaic to be (you could also use an old tile, if you want your item to be waterproof); one rather larger

Masking tape

Water and sponge

Lint-free cloth (a bit of old sheet is good)

Dampen the brown paper slightly and tape it firmly (tape along all the edges) to the larger board. Stretch it as you



Dragon mosaic designed and made by the author's neighbours, Candida Blaker and Stephen Clarke

tape it. When it is dry, sketch your design in pencil. Remember that it will come out reversed, so if you are doing a number or writing, do it backwards. It is probably best to start with something small and simple, say a star or a geometric design. A mirror in a mosaic frame is effective; if you want to do this, gum the mirror face down in position before starting the mosaic. Your local glass cutter will snip you a piece of mirror to size.

Next choose your colours. Gum the paper for the section of design that you are working on, and stick the tiles smooth side down (one side is ridged; that side should be up) on to the paper. Clip the little glass tiles (tesserae) into shape as you wish. You need put only the edge of the tile into the clippers; it will snap. The closer you fit the tiles together, the more professional the result. Use the tiles' own straight edges for the edge of your design. Remember that the cut edges can be sharp.

When your design is done, let it dry. Then take the other piece of board (or tile) and make sure that it fits fairly accurately over your design. Apply a layer of grout about 1cm thick all over it, and score it with the grout knife. Do this gently, and make sure it is positioned correctly before you press — there's no going back at this stage.

Then put another board, some heavy books and/or weights on top, and leave for 24 hours. The next day, take off the weights and take down your mosaic. The tiles should be stuck firmly into the grout, and the brown paper should come away from the board with them. Use water and a sponge to soak the brown paper off the tiles. Be very careful. A few tiles may remain attached to the paper, so ease

them gently and take your time. If the tiles come off, you can glue them back into position. This is the crunch moment: not only do you find out if your tiles have stuck properly, you see your design for the first time.

If the mosaic seems firm, take your grouting knife and remove any extra-grout. Then, with the knife (or your fingers) fill in any gaps between the tiles and tidy up the edges. Leave to dry for a couple of hours, then wipe over with a damp cloth. You may have to scrub, or even use the knife, depending on how much excess grout there is. A film of grout will make the tiles dull, so be careful.

When everything is tidy and beautiful, let it dry for 24 hours, and polish off with a dry cloth. Then put it on your kitchen table, make yourself a congratulatory pot of tea and you'll have a colourful mat on which to put it.

PROPERTY NEWS

■ THE housing market is ending the year on a high note, according to the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. Optimism has not been dampened by a 44 per cent rise, with 44 per cent of surveyors nationwide reporting price increases in November.

■ THE market has surpassed all expectations in 1996, according to agents Knight Frank, with a rise of 17.6 per cent in the prime London residential index since November 1995. Country houses have increased by 5 to 10 per cent.

■ THIS year will be remembered as the one people came out to look for property, say the Blackhorse agencies, with 29 per cent more people registering in the South to buy houses than last year, while viewings in the North East have increased by 20 per cent.

■ THE market has not stopped this autumn, says agent Strutt & Parker, which has sold almost 25 per cent more properties to the end of November 1996, compared with the same time last year.

■ PRIME central London agents have had a good year. De Groot Collis says 25 per cent of prime central London property sold within three months of coming onto the market, while Friend & Falcke records a rise of 10 per cent in the rentals market.

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Learning to say goodbye

Family grief at a death must not exclude the children

The bleakness that followed my mother's death almost three years ago was so overwhelming that there were times when I silently wished I could walk into the sea and let it cover me. But this in turn would be swept away by a more powerful instinct: I could not let my children down, not when they had just lost their grandmother.

For my six and seven-year-old daughters, grandma's death was an unexpectedly early glimpse of the human condition, bringing alarming thoughts to the surface. If my mother could die, they reasoned, so could theirs: if I was next, which in generational terms I was, what would happen to them? And the big one: why did grandma have to die at all? These questions forced me to face reality: we are all vulnerable, none of us live for ever and sorrow will at some time shock us into a sense of our own powerlessness. In these few bald but universal truths, my girls had led me to an unlikely consolation.

Lester Sireling, a consultant psychiatrist, still sees many adults who were sent away as children at the time of a grandparent's death. When they returned home they found that photographs had been removed and their grandparent's name was never mentioned again. It sounds Victorian, yet Dr Sireling insists the inability to talk simply and truthfully with children about death is more common than we realise and many children are still expected to take their parents' lead and pretend nothing has happened.

"Nobody mentions it and there is often a dear message that the child must not ask. No parent wants their child to feel bad and it's quite natural to want to protect them from sad news, but euphemisms like 'Granmy's gone to sleep' can leave them with images far worse than the reality," he says. "I have patients who are terrified of going to sleep, frightened that what happened to granmy might happen to them. Creating taboos can only sow the seeds of problems later on. If you are open with children, their distress can be therapeutic for both of you. We have to accept as part of maturity that our parents are neither perfect nor immortal."

This rural lesson was one the Carson children had to learn when their father David died, without



Janis Carson with her sons Simon, left, Daniel, right, Oliver, right front, and baby Douglas, born after the boys' father had died

warning, at the age of 36, three years ago. Balancing her own grief with the devastation of her three sons Daniel, nine, Oliver, seven, and Simon, five, was the central challenge facing their mother Janis, then 11 weeks pregnant. David's death, she says, was "like being kicked in the stomach", their entire future together lost in a moment. Yet when this young widow, who had to give birth to a child her husband would never see, compared her own loss with her boys', she knew her children's loss was total. "My wonderful marriage was over, but I knew my boys would always be scarred; you can't replace a father. There would be many times when they would feel

sad their father was not here to share things with them. They were going to suffer for so long that I was prepared to do anything I could to ease it. I realised the best way to help was to be absolutely open."

Each son has grieved differently. One sobbed, another could not shed a tear, while the third was obsessed with home videos of his father. "He just had to watch them all the time. When he did, my late husband's voice used to carry through the house. It was very hard, but how can you take away something that gives a child comfort?" With an admirable toughness, Janis has encouraged her

sons to find ways of handling their emotions on their own, and has found the courage to respond to their anxieties for their future in the event that they are orphaned. Even so, there have been times when the depth of their sorrow has threatened to engulf her.

"One of my boys intended to run into the road and get himself killed and it wouldn't matter 'because Daddy will look after me'. I found that frightening. I had to tell him it's not that easy, that he would not go straight to Daddy. Everyone has their allotted time and you are not allowed to go until it is your turn."

Janis talks to them and cries with them and she finds books helpful. Some are so poignant they make

her weep. But through the simple words and pictures, her children see that other boys have lost fathers — and they draw strength.

As for baby Douglas, now just over two years old, Janis is conscious that her work has not even begun. He recognises his father in photographs and she hopes that he, too, will feel connected. "You must go forward even if sometimes it's fighting forward. And when you've got a baby who's smiling at you, how can you not smile back? However sad I feel, it lifts me up again. This is what I'm here for."

JUDY GOODKIN

Cruse, the bereavement counselling service, is on 0181 332 7227.

Heaven's door

Ruth Gledhill enjoys the hotbed of the newly-converted



AS ONE of my New Year's resolutions is to make no more jokes about HTB, the church in Knightsbridge

there hundreds of starry-eyed and fabulously wealthy twentysomethings find Jesus each month. I decided to lay the old prejudices to rest by going to hear the Archbishop of Canterbury, no less, preach there. Tales of Christian doctors, bankers and lawyers falling to the ground, laughing, crying and barking like dogs have been doing the rounds in religious circles, and a hot spot of such feverish activity is said to be Holy Trinity Brompton.

Knightsbridge seems an unlikely place to find what is arguably the country's most successful church, providing spiritual and moral certainties in an uncertain world. Success here cannot be judged only by numbers of converts, which are in themselves incredible, but must be assessed also by the subsequent quality of their faith. Again, those prepared to speak about it seem truly transformed. The church is birthplace of the "Alpha" course, the newcomer's introduction to the faith which has achieved a phenomenal success rate and is even being used by some Roman Catholic churches. It has a formidable array of staff and one of the country's most charismatic curates, the Rev Nicky Gumbel.

And, like some fervid tree from the original garden of Eden, HTB seems unable to stop branching out into new church "plants". As its worshippers overflow, they leave in groups to found new congregations all over London — at nearby St Paul's Onslow Square, further to

the west in Kensington, in Battersea and elsewhere.

Yet, in spite of my determination to be sceptically and coolly Anglican, an hour's worship there did have the taste of paradise about it. As it is every week, the church was packed to overflowing. I squeezed into a space in the balcony.

The Archbishop, Dr George Carey, was in the choir stalls, behind an array of candles. His wife, Eileen, shortly to receive an enormous bouquet of flowers, was in the front row. Behind them, on a stage above the chancel steps, the band was playing. The vicar, Sandy Millar, gave Dr Carey a biography of Thomas Cranmer, former Archbishop of Canterbury, burned at the stake in 1535.

Cranmer was an innovative man, said Mr Millar. "He was moving in the power of God, determined to preach the word of God in the midst of constant misunderstanding and opposition." We are moving in the power of God, we sang, as the collection bags went round. We prayed for the Queen, the Royal Family, John Major and the Government, and for the 5,000 people expected to pass through the doors of Holy Trinity that week. We all said "the peace", and this was a rare occasion where the hugs seemed natural.

The children went off to their crèche as Dr Carey stood to preach: "We live in disturbing times," he said, arguing that the church's role at a time when society stands "on the brink of a new dark age" was critical. Holy Trinity had experienced substantial numerical growth, he said, warning that the credit was due not "to ourselves" but to the grace of God alone.

● Holy Trinity, Brompton Road, London SW7 1UA (0171 581 8255).

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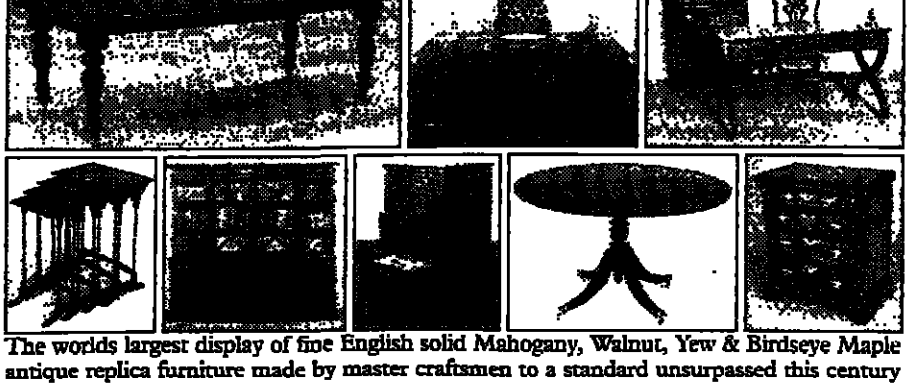
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The turkeys may be beyond help, but why should all those lovely feathers be going to waste?

Let's go to heaven in a feather bed

It is too late now to worry about turkeys. Let us hope that most of them have lived a short life and a good one, but I doubt it. I have never kept turkeys and so am open to persuasion, but by all accounts an intelligent thought crossing their minds is as rare as a silver sixpence in a Christmas pudding. They have little charm but a neighbour did once keep one as a pet and was occasionally seen picking it up, stroking it, and whispering in its ear. It never seemed to notice.

But lack of brain is no excuse for what has been done to the turkey in the interests of commercial gain and supposed consumer desire. The enlargement of their breasts to the point of deformity is well documented. But, as I say, it is too late now. We must make note to do something about it next year.

What concerns me more is not so much what has become of the turkeys, but where have all the feathers gone? Not only turkey feathers: on the table of nearly every meat-eating family this Christmas will have been some form of poultry, and logic demands that somewhere there is a mountain of discarded cladding.

At least, I hope it is discarded, for lurking in the back of my mind are stories of poultry feathers being processed for their protein, and then fed back to poultry to fatten them. Perhaps it

was just a rumour, possibly not that it is believable these days is sufficiently worrying. Feathers are much on my mind because an increasing part of my life is spent in intimate contact with them. Hardly a minute of my waking life passes without a thought of feathers, and every moment of my sleep is spent cocooned in them. We have just bought a feather bed. It has changed my life. Feather beds died out with maiden aunts and a certain class of seaside boarding house, and in recent years we have been persuaded to believe that the best night's sleep was to be had by lashing ourselves to what might as well be a plank. Like so many others, we fell for the line, bought a bed as hard as a slab and expected to live long and fit lives. The fact that we woke in pain every morning for 15 years did not matter. Hard beds are good for you. They said so.

Of course, had I looked around me I would soon have learnt that the Sleep as Suffering school of thought was flawed. Having kept pigs and observed their sleeping habits (and pigs do rather more sleeping than anything else) I would have seen how they made themselves comfortable and copied them. In the



PAUL HEINEY

achieve with its straw. At first sight, a plump feather bed appears to be an impossible perch: it sits on the bed as high as a meringue, but lie on it and it sinks, taking you into its feathery grasp as you fall, allowing you the happiest of landings. And there you are for the night, as snug as a pig.

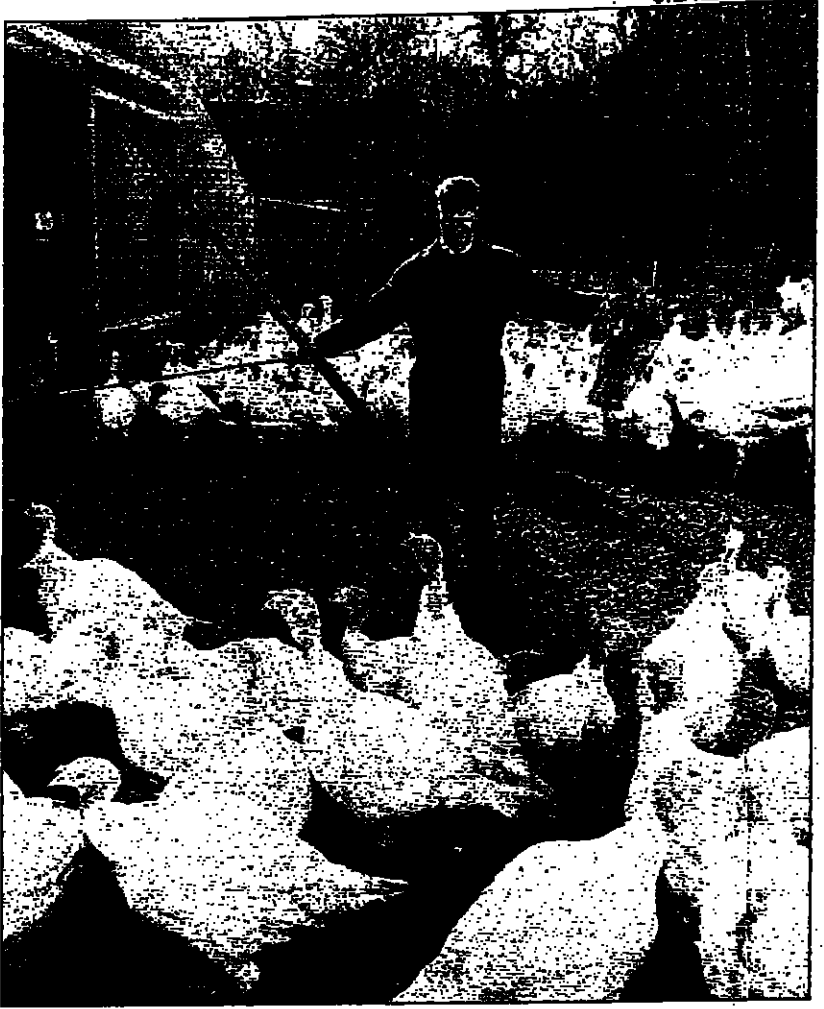
It is not an entirely idle business, for you must plump up your bed every morning if you are to enjoy the sinking sensation at bedtime, and given the weight of feathers this can qualify as aerobic exercise. My only sad thought is for the ducks who sacrificed their down for my comfort. I wonder, as I roll over, how many ducks there are down there, and could the burden of the duck not be relieved by all the turkey feathers which must go flying at this time of year? Annie Elliott of the Feather Bed Company in

Tiverton, who made mine, tells me that no, you could not use turkey because "they don't do the three-dimensional curl that ducks feathers can, which is why duck feather beds keep their shape". Poor old turkey; useless for everything except stuffing. "Those old feather beds of granny's were often made with chicken feathers which are a bit like a turkey's, and that's why they went lumpy," she said.

She reminded me of a chorus of a verse written in praise of the feather bed and which I may well be singing next year instead of Christmas carols:

*It was nine feet tall and six feet wide, soft as downy chick
It was made from the feathers of forty-seven geese,
Took a whole ball of cloth for the tick.
It'd hold eight kids and four hound dogs and a piggy we stole from the shed.
We didn't get much sleep, but we had a lot of fun on Grandma's feather bed.*

And now, although I have only recently risen, all this talk of my feather bed is making me drowsy. I can only say that had the Bethlehem shepherds not been seated on the ground, but snoozing on a feather bed, the appearance of the Angel of the Lord might have escaped them completely. So, a happy new year, and please wake me in time for 1997.



Turkey farmers should do something useful with those discarded feathers

Avian Pucks weave their magic again

FEATHER REPORT

ONE OF THE best bits of news in the British Trust for Ornithology's latest breeding bird survey is that linnet numbers are up again. This survey compares the summer of 1995 with the summer of 1994, and it finds that there was a 15 per cent rise in the linnet population from one year to the next.

Linnet are among those weeded eaters of farmland and heaths which have been most badly hit by herbicides. They come down from the hedges to feed on dandelion and sorrel seeds in the summer, while in winter they turn more to the pink persicaria, and to goosefoots such as fat hen, which scatter plenty of seeds on the ground.

They have the lightest, most dancing flight of all the small birds, and as they go they seem to sprinkle their rapid twitters and twanging notes over the fields. In summer, one of the most animated of all bird sights is a male linnet, swaying on the topmost twig of a bramble or gorse bush, and sweeping off with his mate the moment she emerges from the tangle where she has been building their nest. They are the avian Pucks or Aniels.

Perhaps the campaign to encourage farmers to let their set-aside fields alone until the weeds have ripened, and to leave verges and headlands to themselves, is beginning to take effect. Greenfinches, which often accompany linnet, were up 8 per cent.

Robins and wrens are still both very common birds, fortunately, but they are affected by hard winters and their numbers go up and down. This survey records a small increase for both of them. In the mild weather just before Christmas, I heard both species singing in London gardens before dawn — but they have to work hard to find small insects and spiders in the frost and snow.

A large increase was recorded for the stonechat, which is a near relative of the robin, and like it, it has a red breast, though the male's black head and broken white collar make it quite distinctive. It is most commonly found in gorse bushes on moors, and especially on seaside cliffs, but it moves around in winter and at this time of year you may come across one on patches of waste ground or even allotments — the closest it gets to being a household bird. It draws attention to itself by its sharp call, like two pebbles being knocked together.

I was not surprised to learn that moorhens and coots were up in numbers. The solitary, bad-tempered coot seem to have territories along every

few yards of river now, while the fields alongside rivers and ponds are full of moorhens scurrying for cover when you get near them, the white feathers on each side of their cocked tails flashing like rear lights.

Of the other wintering British birds, rises in the numbers of hawks, buzzards and lapwings are most notable. There were also quite substantial increases for a number of summer visitors — which at present, of course, are enjoying the sun in the Mediterranean or in Africa.

Birdlovers who have lost the house martins from under their eaves will be glad to know that this survey indicates that they may be coming back, with an increase of 12 per cent recorded. Scaled martins showed a quite spectacular rise — 52 per cent — though swallows appear still to be decreasing.

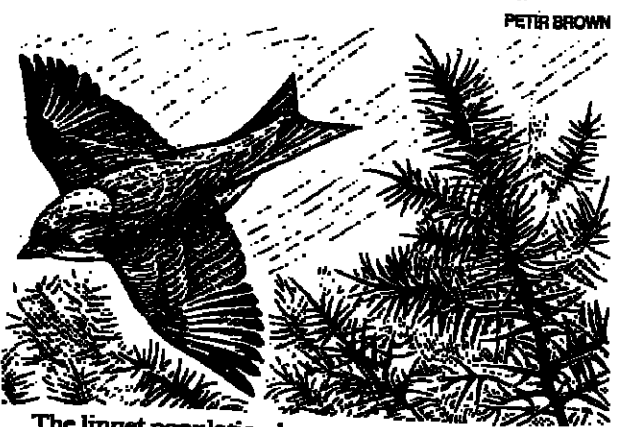
Wheatears and white-throats, chiffchaffs and willow warblers were all up. I noticed myself that the countryside was alive again with those last three species last summer — whitethroats scolding in the hedges, willow warblers singing in small spinneys and along railway embankments, chiffchaffs everywhere in the high treetops.

HOWEVER, there are losses too, and one of the saddest is the decline — calculated at 8 per cent — in yellowhammers. This was also something I thought I detected in the last couple of summers. For the past 20 years, as the fields have grown more silent, the yellowhammer's ringing song has continued to sound on, all the more noticeable since it is about the last bird left singing after the wheat has been cut in August.

But this year and last I was sure there were fewer down in the parts of England I know well. It is all rather mysterious, because the yellowhammer also lives largely on weeds, in the same sort of habitat as many greenfinches and linnet. Few of the other changes I have mentioned could have been predicted — so let us hope that yellowhammers, too, have only suffered a temporary setback. Now we shall see what is in the nest for 1997.

DERWENT MAY

What's about: Birds — look out for visitors to gardens such as reed buntings, meadow pipits, yellowhammers and skylarks. The parts: red-breasted goose, Cuckoo, Great reed sparrow, Water rail, Cuckoo, snow goose, Walling, Oryzopsis. Details from Birdline, 081 700222. Calls 40p a min cheap rate. 30p at other times.



The linnet population has started to pick up at last



Dorset sheep lamb an average of three times in any two-year period. Their unique ability to punch holes in the farming calendar was noted by farming experts as early as 1707

I'll never find another ewe

Dorset sheep breed all year and they don't mind the cold. Not only that, they have come to the financial rescue of cattle farmers in crisis

Newborn lambs nudge at their mothers for their first feed in the real world. Dozens more, their stomachs already full of the milk and its immunity-giving colostrum, snuggle down in the warmth of the straw. Some just bleat in bemused chorus. The forecast says tonight will be clear, crisp and starlit. The scenes strike obvious seasonal chords. But this is Jim Dufosse's farm at Warminster, in the Wiltshire winter. "It's the last of the lambing," he says. "It means I can have some sleep at last."

Nearby, on the chill, wind-swept Salisbury Plain, more of Dufosse's 381 ewes graze with their young, on land available under licence from the Ministry of Defence. It may not be the traditional greetings card setting — but this particular shepherd is well satisfied. This Christmas, the 570 new lambs have been a godsend. For Mr Dufosse, 34, and his wife, Jacqui, this has been the year of BSE, of unsaleable beef and of disappearing cashflow. Most painfully, it has been the year that saw 45 of their home-reared cattle compulsorily destroyed and burnt.

He says: "If you've reared beef cattle from calves, you will have had them for two and a half years. They're for

human consumption and you know there's a purpose to it all. But to be suddenly told that these animals, looking perfect, and at the stage where people want to buy them, are going to be burnt and thrown away, it's devastating. For three weeks I sent someone else to go and check the cattle. I just couldn't face it.

"It's been a terrible year but my Dorset lambs have been the silver lining." Mr Dufosse is the fifth generation of his family to farm as a tenant of the great Longleat Estate. The Dorset Horn, and its hornless derivative, the Poll Dorset, are the only breeds of sheep that lamb at any time of year, including Christmas.

The unique ability of Dorsets to punch holes in the traditional farming calendar was noted by farming cognoscenti as early as 1707. Edward Lisle wrote in his book, *Observations in Husbandry*, of a



Jim Dufosse: "My Dorset sheep have been this year's silver lining"

tenant whose lambs were born at yuletide and "sold fat to the butcher at Lady Day [March 25]".

By the late 1800s, Dorsets were coming to the rescue of a British agricultural industry that was in deep crisis from a succession of poor harvests. Breeders realised that they had an animal that could provide Australia and North America with stock and im-

prove the quality of their flocks. Lambing an average of three times in any two-year period, Dorsets remain as versatile as ever. And with the modern farming industry now fending off a crisis of another kind, it could well be the breed whose time has come again.

Over the past 18 months, membership of the 105-year-old Dorset Horn and Poll Dorset Sheep Breeders Association has grown steadily from

325 to 400. Its secretary, Liz Johnson, says a crucial factor was winning Supreme Champion at the 1995 Royal Show but she does not rule out an indirect link with the aftermath of BSE — with farmers looking to recoup their losses and to build a broader base for the future.

"The Royal Show was like winning the Grand National," she says. "I think people are now looking not just at the Dorset, but at sheep generally. But the bottom line is that they have to look at profit margins and turnover — and the Dorset can provide a good return on capital investment."

"If there is a crisis, you look to other aspects of the business to back it up — which is why it is important not to have all your eggs in one basket. You don't like to gain at somebody else's expense. It's sad, but that's life."

Dorset flocks, well able to

stand the cold, are established in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and parts of the north of England. But 100 ewes have recently been shipped to a diversifying beef farmer in Derbyshire.

Mr Dufosse, always a fervent ambassador for Dorsets, believes the breed is ideally placed to become permanently established beyond its West Country stronghold. "We've got such a good product. It's in their genetic makeup to lamb whenever."

"They can move according to market forces so you can be producing lamb when others are not, and the lambs naturally reach their finished weight within ten weeks."

For Ms Johnson, Dorsets have more endearing attributes. "They're nice to be with — placid and easy going. They can also be very stubborn. But that's not a problem because it means they're going to survive."

Mr Dufosse will drink to that. He says: "The Dorsets have given us a reason to go out the door in the morning. This Christmas, my youngest boy, Joseph, has been in his first nativity play. He didn't want to be one of the wise men. He just wanted to be a shepherd."

BRIAN PEDLEY



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amid the
teeming
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Red Sea • 13

THE TIMES travel

How to plan
your own
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The lemurs and their lost world

Madagascar is a
must for anyone in
love with nature

Lemurs are almost too cute to live. This is a fact, whether they are leaping through the trees or sunbathing in uncannily human fashion — faces raised, little paws firmly placed on knees.

Lemurs are synonymous with Madagascar and, alone, are a good enough reason for battling through the bureaucracy and awe-inspiring roads which help to form the world's fourth largest island. But add glorious beaches, primary rainforests and Lost World beauty and you will find that Madagascar, still remarkably tourist-free, contains enticements around every corner — and 95 per cent of its magnificent flora and fauna is endemic.

But concentrating solely on nature does a disservice to the most beguiling of Madagascar's inhabitants — its people, the majority of whom are crammed into Antananarivo, the island's extraordinary capital. A French medieval town crossed with Terry Pratchett's Discworld city, Ankar-Morpo, Tana is a prerequisite of Malagasy travel, if only because all roads ultimately lead there.

Town houses pile up the hills and a huge open-air market heaves with people and hundreds of stalls selling everything from live chickens to model cars made from fly-spray cans. But add a guild of beggars, open sewers and numerous dark alleys down which the tourist dare not venture, and one could be forgiven for wanting to get out as soon as possible. This would be a pity, because Tana has its own character and, in a way, sums up the island remarkably well.

Although Madagascar is essentially a Third World country, the myth that it must therefore be cheap should be quickly dispelled. True, the basic essentials cost little enough, but if you want to move comparatively quickly, visit the national parks or take advantage of the formidable under-water diving sites, expect to pay considerably more.

Madagascar is one of the poorest nations in the world. Tourists, by comparison, are very rich. This is the bottom line and will be the guileless response every time you blanch with horror at the extortionate prices charged for internal flights or car hire.

The island comprises four distinct

regions and if you are limited by time, the only practical option for seeing them all is to fly Air Mad — which, despite its picturesque nickname, has an impressive safety record. Flight also becomes far more enticing when you know an hour's journey by plane would take several years off your life by taxi-brousse.

Our party initially decided to explore the hire-car option, speed not being entirely of the essence. Thanks to Olivier, the Del Boy Trotter of Tana, we acquired a Peugeot in remarkably good condition plus Davis, an extremely personable driver. There are several self-drive firms in Tana, but because most of the roads comprise one vast pothole, it seemed prudent to let someone else do the work, even if we did have to get out and push a couple of times.

Another bonus of a Malagasy driver is that you are introduced to people you might not, as Vazahas, otherwise meet. "Vazaha" (Malagasy for light-skinned foreigner) is the word you will often hear thrown in your direction. This is extremely endearing when shouted by huge-eyed children, less so coming from leering men in large trucks. Vazahas are, in many places, still a source of wonder — in fact, the poorer and more isolated the village, the more delighted people are to see you. An impromptu England v Madagascar football match (played with a rag ball) demonstrated this by drawing a huge crowd of giggling children and cheering grown-ups.

We stopped first in Antsirabe, a truly weird town. Madagascar, once a French colony, bears witness to that legacy in the beautiful buildings and — a bonus — delicious food. In Antsirabe's Grande Avenue, elegant 19th-century Parisian buildings line the wide cobbled street while a kilometre away are houses where the windows are stuffed with straw and an average of 15-20 people share four tiny rooms. That night, we ate in a local restaurant where a band performed gentle pop songs sung by sweet-voiced men and women.

Ranomafana National Park was reached after an impressive drive of 25 kilometres in two and a half hours. Worth it, though, when your wooden bungalow overlooks a waterfall and the only other sound is the wind in the trees. A guide is essential in the park — apart from stopping you getting hopelessly lost, they can also spot a two-inch chameleon at 50 paces.

Fide ("I am in the Bradt Guide") certainly knew his stuff and our first view of free-range lemurs could never have been achieved alone. A guide who speaks English is also a delight. Malagasy and French being the two official languages. Conversations of the "how much is this tablecloth?" kind are all very well, but in-depth discussions on politics, local customs and fady (taboos) prove more tricky with O-level vocabulary.

Several parks later and we were still in no danger of finding lemurs — or indeed Madagascar — boring. You never tire of looking, whether it be at the gorgeous white *sifakas* leaping sideways along the ground, or the dusty Wild West towns, their inhabitants shrouded in blankets and sombreros.

Arriving in Fort Dauphin on the south-east coast some days later, we thought we'd hit Nirvana. Surely no beach could be more beautiful than Libanona? No lemurs more endearing than ringtails? But there was still Nasy Be with its endless white sand and stunning coral reefs and finally, and perhaps most magical, the Perinet reserve, less than four hours from Tana.

As you walk through the dripping rainforest just after sunrise and smell the newly washed freshness of the trees, you suddenly hear an eerie, oddly moving, whale-like call echoing for miles. These are the Indri, the largest lemur species, closely resembling teddy bears.

The word lemur means "spirits of the dead which are reincarnated and living in the forest" and, spellbound in the hushed, breathless dawn, you quickly find yourself hoping that the reincarnated spirits will continue to watch over this enchanted but fragile island.

SHARON ECKMAN

• The author was a guest of Air Madagascar.

Avian Puck
weave their
magic again

FEATHER REPORT



The ring-tailed lemur is not shy of humans. The word lemur means "spirits of the dead which live in the forest"

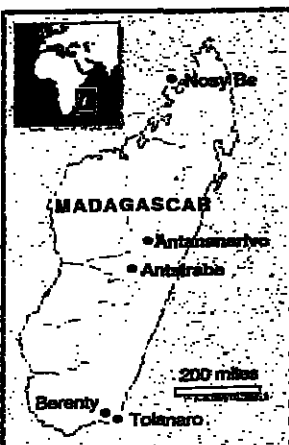
■ Air Madagascar (01293 523958) flies from Paris, Frankfurt, Zurich and Munich from £640 return, and can arrange connecting flights to these cities with British Midland from £120. Air France (0181-742 6600) flies from London via Paris.

■ The author's six-day tour of Madagascar, with driver, was booked with Julia Voyage, Antananarivo (00 261 226574, fax 234853), which can tailor an itinerary to suit individual requirements.

■ The exchange rate of Malagasy franc is at present 6,000 to the £1. French francs, dollars, sterling or travellers' cheques are all accepted. Credit cards are of little use outside the capital. Malagasy francs cannot be taken out of the country or changed back to hard currency, so cash only what is essential, especially towards the end of the trip.

■ British passport holders require visas for Madagascar. These cost £35 and are valid for 30 days. It is advisable to get a visa before leaving Britain from the Consulate of Madagascar at

MADAGASCAR FACT FILE



16 Lanark Mansions,
Pennard Road, London W12
(0181-746 0133).

■ Inoculations against typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis are advised. Malaria is prevalent, discuss prophylaxis with your doctor. Take a first aid kit and sterile syringes for emergencies. Food is generally safe in hotels and restaurants but be careful

when buying from stalls. Drink only bottled water.

■ Never venture out in Tana wearing anything remotely valuable and never go out on foot after dark. Muggings are common in the capital, so always take a taxi or ask a security guard to escort you. Elsewhere is safer, but you are still advised against taking valuables to Madagascar in the first place.

■ Food: the French legacy means baguettes are sold in at street stalls and the coffee (usually served with condensed milk) is excellent. There is also a strong Asian influence and soups Chinese appear on most menus in varying forms. Zebu meat (large-humped cattle) is either ambrosial or impossible to chew. Seafood is freshly caught. The local beer is Three Horse Beer and there are some good wines, the best being Lazan 1 Betsileo.

■ There are plenty of things to buy. Look out for semi-precious stones, musical

instruments, leather goods (belts and bags), beautiful wood carving, embroidered tablecloths and jewellery.

■ Refuse to buy anything made from tortoiseshell, snakeskin or crocodile. Also avoid sea shells and fossils. Be aware (or find out about) local customs and taboos. Ancestor worship is practised in Madagascar so never speak lightly of death, ancestors or tradition. Also help to preserve the ecosystem by keeping to established tracks and note that it is illegal to buy any indigenous plants or articles of funerary art.

■ Sarah Anderson of the Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends *A History of Madagascar* by Mervyn Brown (Damen Tunncliffe, £12.95, ISBN 1 853 68745 6). *Madagascar Travels* by Christina Dodwell (Sceptre, £6.99, ISBN 0 340 66002 3). *Madagascar Wildlife* by Hilary Bradt (Bradt, £14.95, ISBN 1 898 32540 2). *Madagascar and Comoros Travel Survival Kit* (Lonely Planet, £9.95, ISBN 0 864 42196 6).

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Argentina and Costa Rica: Despite their comparative sizes, each has the same appeal for travellers – wildlife



FACT FILE

- The author flew to Buenos Aires with Varig. St George's House, 10 Conduit Street, London W1R 0HG (0171-257 3131), which has services from Heathrow on Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat and Sun from £680.
- Aerolineas Argentinas and Austral fly daily from Buenos Aires to all major cities in Argentina. LAPA flies to Tandil on Tue, Wed, and Thurs. The most interesting areas of the country tend to be a long way from Buenos Aires. Adventurous or thrifty travellers might consider travelling by bus (good) or train (less so). Land journeys vary from 15 to 36 hours.
- Accommodation on Argentine estancias can be arranged locally in Buenos Aires through Pauline Edbrooke at V.Y.T. Carlos Pellegrini 739, 5th Floor, 1000 Buenos Aires, (00 541 322 2011), or in London through Steamond South American Travel, 23 Eccleston Street, London SW1 (0171-730 8648). Prices vary from about £75 to £150 per person per day, including full-board and taxes. Transport from the local airport to the estancia can be arranged. The price varies according to distance. £31 for San Juan Porriahu, £25 for El Bordo de Las Lanzas, £12.50 for Aclain. The price includes three passengers, or four with light luggage.
- The best time of the year to visit the Esteros de Iberá is July to late Sept/early Oct: Salta and the northwest, Aug to Oct: Aclain, Sept to Nov/Mar to May.
- Visas are not required for British passport holders staying less than 60 days.
- The Argentine currency is the peso. The present exchange rate is 1 peso to about 65p.



The dramatic peaks of the Andes on Argentina's western border are in huge contrast to the pampas edged with tropical jungle

A landscape to sigh for

The old South American joke goes that when God was about to complete his creative work on the continent, he was putting the finishing touches to the southern tip, representatives from all other areas came to see Him. "It's not fair, Lord," they complained. "You've given Argentina every landscape and every climate. You've made it so beautiful." God thought for a moment. "I haven't been unfair," he replied. "I also gave it the Argentine people."

Whether the locals deserve the title is a matter of perpetual disagreement between them and their neighbours, but everybody agrees that Argentina is a beautiful and varied country: the central plains of the pampas are edged with tropical jungle and the magnificent iguazu waterfalls in the northeast; the multicoloured mountains and valleys of the northwest, where local life preserves traces of the Inca culture; the volcanic peaks of the Andes all along the western border – varying from the vineyards and ski stations in the central region to the great lakes, woods and glaciers in the south; and the marine life

along the Patagonian coast, with its breeding grounds for sea lions, seals, penguins and whales. All these contrasting regions share a common feature: Argentina is a virtually empty country. You can feel alone in the landscape, to experience nature more or less as God left it, probably the greatest pleasure imaginable for serious travellers. The price to pay for this privilege is a shortage of comfortable accommodation close to the great sights. In some cases, a good hotel is available nearby, but often it's necessary to make long journeys from the nearest town, which can be a hundred miles away or more in Patagonia, or other isolated regions. However, Argentine law has come to the rescue of adventurous travellers in an unexpected way. Estancias, as estates are called here, have to be divided equally among heirs: the share that includes the estate house inevitably carries a smaller acreage of productive land attached to it. After several generations, economics have forced many landowners to use their big houses to generate income,

so they take in paying guests. Standards of service vary from excellent to charmingly amateur but, in most cases, the accommodation is far superior to whatever else is available locally. The owners do their best to help visitors enjoy the rural life, their ancestors having had first pick of the most beautiful spot in the area. I chose to stay at three estancias in very different regions, but there are dozens of them, all over the country. The Esteros de Iberá, the great marshes of the Paraná river, cover more than a million acres of the province of Corrientes, near the border with Paraguay. The vast lagoons and wetlands are one of the richest wildlife reserves in Argentina: yacares (the local alligator), swamp deer, monkeys, ostriches and the rare aguara-guazu (hairly wolf) co-exist with more than 200 species of birds. One of them is the jabiru, the largest stork in the western hemisphere and a startling sight when in flight against the deep blue sky. Until recently, the only way to visit the esteros was either on day trips, giving a short, frustrating glimpse of their vastness, or by spending rough nights in tents. No longer: rooms are available at San Juan Porriahu, a large livestock ranch on the western edge of the marshes. Scheduled flights from Buenos Aires arrive at Corrientes several times a day, and transport can be arranged from the airport to the estate. The comfortable house, a long, low building, has the

simple, white-washed beauty and echoing spaciousness of colonial days. The deep open gallery at the front faces the park with its exuberant subtropical trees; the polished terracotta tiles on the floor are the same rich red of the iron-saturated soil, which contrasts with the lush greens of the vegetation and the grass. For fishing enthusiasts, Paso de la Patria is 60 miles away. During August and September, it is the dorado season, and fishermen come from all corners of the world to catch the gold-skinned fish, which vary in weight from 20lb to 40lb and are reputed to require even greater skill and stamina to land than salmon. If you want a taste of the plush life of the Argentine cattle barons at the turn of the century in the middle of the century, try Aclain, near Tandil, 250 miles south of Buenos Aires. Its creator, Enrique Larreta, was a writer, obsessed with the glory of Spain in the Renaissance, the subject of his best-known novel, *La Gloria de Don Ramiro*. After marrying an heiress, her land and money made it possible for him to fulfil his fantasy in 1915, when he built a huge Spanish-style house and chapel, surrounded by a landscaped park of 1,000 acres. The house sits on a tall hill that dominates the surrounding plain, and flights of stone steps flanked by cypresses lead to the Arab-inspired water gardens and the great park. The lofty interiors of the house are recreations of rooms of the period, with fireplaces and works of art bought from Spanish convents or palaces. Not content with creating this South American Xanadu for himself, Larreta built an Ali Baba's cave in the cellars, including huge jars full of fake treasure, as a playground for his grandchildren. For visitors to Buenos Aires, one or two days in Aclain can be a welcome break from metropolitan restlessness. Covert employer: accommodation within the main house is not always available, and Aclain, like other really grand houses in Argentina, can be less user-friendly to paying guests than smaller, family-run homes. The climate varies enormously, sometimes within the same province. Every region has its best period during the year, and in some areas there are seasons to be avoided. Good tourist guidebooks, or a reliable travel agent, can help you make the most of a great journey. And Argentines are much nicer than their neighbours would like you to believe.

WILLIAM GILL

Eco means living with tarantulas

The San José newspaper *Costa Rica Today* listed meetings for the Coffee Pickin' Square Dance Club, the Centre for Attitudinal Healing and the Refrigeration Service Engineers Society. As an extra public service, it reminded those of us who were about to move from a city hotel to a series of rural lodges, that the rainy season meant the transfer of the tarantulas from waterlogged burrows to the shelter of houses. However, the spider's reputation is worse than its bite: the tiny scarlet and blue frogs perched in the undergrowth are far more poisonous.

I will never read another local paper. I thought days later, as I lay perfectly still in my dark, stilled, wooden cabin on the Pacific coast watching a firefly pulsate across the room like some tiny green fluorescent UFO. The problem was the rustling in the rafters and the tiny frog hopping towards the wardrobe – all frogs are red and deadly in the dark.

What with the aptly named howler monkeys squabbling in the trees and a scurrying under the floor that could have been an armadillo but sounded bigger, I wasn't sure I was cut out for unspoilt Costa Rican eco-tourism.

At daybreak, our host assured me the frog, now in the wardrobe, was indeed small but also green, the midnight scurrier probably his dog and the spider was in its burrow by the front door. For those without an over-active imagination, La Escondida ranch is a delight. Its seclusion means one radio-phone and no hot water, but swimming, walking, riding the cattle range or sailing up the deserted canals between the tangled roots of the mangrove forests, trailed by pot-bellied brown pelicans, ospreys as common as sparrows and the occasional crocodile.

The local fishermen's latin band was a backdrop to dinner, with rhythms never heard in Grimsby, as we were coached in the intricacies of salsa and samba for our debut at the local hop the following weekend in Monteverde, where young and often chaperoned Costa Ricans, but very few tourists, gathered.

Costa Rica has made some smart moves in the past, which has left it well placed for the eco-tourism of the caring 1990s. The first was disbanding its army in 1948 – "the army is in the schools, the greatest enemy is ignorance" – thus helping the country to avoid the political implosions of its Central American neighbours. The second was concentrating on green pursuits, rather than military coups, preserving the primary rain and cloud forests before the rest of the world knew or cared about the ozone layer.

Despite Costa Rica's husbandry of the environment, its star attractions – volcanoes – owe nothing to conservation. Some bubble and seethe, allowing you close enough to peer into their crater lakes, risking only a blast of sulphur. The black pyramid of Mount Arenal, however, regularly shudders and booms a warning to keep your distance as it does its pyrotechnic party piece. The crater glows red, repeatedly belching hot gases and spiralling plumes of ash into the night. Huger scarlet bulldozers are forced skywards like giant champagne corks before tumbling and chasing ribbons of molten lava down the mountainside. "Awesome", as most of the tourists would say.

Uncle Sam's influence in this part of Central America has been benign, paving the way for those of us worried that showing ecological solidarity means machete-ing your way through the undergrowth to the campfire, and *al fresco* plumbing where you encounter the wildlife when least convenient. There are more comfortable alternatives.

Costa Rica is not, however, a Forestworld theme park – yet. Jungle treks may return you to the hotel by nightfall, but flying objects of varying weight and wingspan necessitate strong repellent and steady nerves. Single file is the only way through dank, claustrophobic green corridors, where the exotic foliage seems faintly sinister. Orchids compete with sci-fi parasitic plants for light, and butterflies the size and colour of Wedgwood plates float by.

The Tilajari Hotel at Muelle, an hour from the Nicaraguan border and handy for Mount Arenal and some of the many national parks, is typical of Costa Rica's bid for the elite, as well as eco-tourism. It opened in 1991, with first-class bungalows in tropical gardens on the San Carlos river, where the house crocodile patrols the banks and prehistoric iguanas bask on the grass. You can share your breakfast with a toucan, chat with macaws by the pool, or watch the humming birds.

Our guides Carlos and Didier, as well as having an encyclopaedic knowledge of their country, were so enthusiastic about the 850 species of bird recorded in Costa Rica that everyone became temporary twitchers.

Only two-thirds the size of Scotland, this tiny country allows easy exploration of its Caribbean and Pacific coasts, as well as the interior, but the Government recognises the difficulty of absorbing mass tourism which could overwhelm the unspoilt environment that attracts visitors.

In 1993 tourists replaced coffee as the top currency earner, yet in 1995 there were only 700,000. Numbers will explode as tourists cautiously return to a more stable Central America and combine, say, the Mayan history of Guatemala with the nature of Costa Rica. A dilemma may arise when the reality of hard currency, the people's wish for higher employment, and a rising standard of living clashes with the Government's aspirations of elite, ie, expensive and limited tourist packages.

Monteverde could be the future, and it doesn't work. Established by American quakers in 1951 near the country's premier cloud forest, it is one of the oldest tourist centres and it shows. An unplanned mess of home-made signs advertising pizza and hamburger joints, butterfly farms, aromatherapy, cheap forest birds and a golden frog extinct for a decade. Having previously encountered few tourists on empty roads, this was Mexican border town meets Woodstock. I had nostalgic thoughts of howler monkeys.

Costa Rica knows success may be its biggest problem, but this beautiful, peaceful country deserves to get it right.

CHRISTINE WHEELER

■ The author was a guest of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and Cox & Kings Travel.



Tour guides Carlos, left, and Didier at Mount Arenal

COSTA RICA FACT FILE

- Cox & Kings, Fourth floor, Gordon House, 10 Greencoat Place, London SW1 (0171-875 5000) offers a 14-day Costa Rica Odyssey Tour from £1,755 per person sharing a twin room (single supplement £275). The price includes some meals and excursions and scheduled international flights with KLM. As well as the destinations mentioned in the article above, the tour includes Tortuguero on the Caribbean coast. Group departures in Feb, Mar, May, Aug, Oct and Nov. The company can also tailor-make individual itineraries.
- Currency: take small denominations US dollar travellers' cheques and currency. Don't even think about making sterling, you might as well offer coach shells. Mastercard and Visa will get a better reception than Amex. The local currency is the colon, about 300-£1.
- Health: no compulsory requirements but precautions against hepatitis, tetanus, typhoid, polio and malaria are recommended. See your GP. Take a strong insect repellent if you suffer from bites.
- Climate: the dry season is between Dec and April, though the Caribbean coastal region tends to have a higher annual rainfall. Temperatures vary little from season to season and the main factor is altitude: eg, the coastal areas average up to 30°C, San José 26°C, and the micro-climates in, for instance,

the cloud forests cooler. Our party visited at the beginning of the rainy season, preferred by some tourists as there are fewer visitors. We had hot sunny mornings with drizzle closing in only in the late afternoon. Most downpours were at night.

■ Food: we stopped for lunch at roadside restaurants, which were without exception clean and welcoming. The average lunch costs about £5-£7: steak, sea bass, tacos, tortilla, rice dishes and fresh tropical fruit on all menus. A suitable lunch was always happily produced without fuss for vegetarians. The country's coffee is wonderful.

■ Clothing: take mostly light cotton things – long-sleeved

shirts and trousers – and stout shoes for the forests, waterproofs for the rainy season. A torch is handy for walking from your accommodation to restaurant in rural areas.

■ Crime: this seems less of a problem in the capital, San José, than other cities in Central America. We were not hassled by street vendors and saw virtually no beggars. Nor are there the slums that rear the eye and conscience in other parts of this continent. However, common sense and street cred are required in a strange city. Take advice from guides and hotel staff on restaurants and bars to visit at night: take taxis and order them at the hotel.

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America: Military-style planning on a trip to the western states gave one family their best holiday ever...

The American dream team

TRAVEL AGENTS can offer holiday-makers the world — at a price. They have the purchasing power to do deals with international airlines and hotels to package your holiday dreams to match your pocket. But what if you want to organise your own holiday, like you used to in the old days, and in the same sort of places

the travel companies offer? Can it be done? Efficiently? Cheaper? And will it be as satisfying? *Times* readers Sandra and Michael Silberstein, of Leeds, decided on a DIY holiday to the western states of America with their children, Daniel, 14, Rebecca, 11, and Deborah, eight. Here is their story of what happened.

The parameters of our Easter family trip to the western states of America were relatively straightforward. We were planning a holiday for two adults and three energetic children aged eight, 11 and 14. We wanted first-class accommodation, a fantastic itinerary covering all the famous landmarks and — most important — it had to fit a tight budget.

The budget for 15 days was limited to £3,500; no holidays paid for by travel companies or expense accounts here. This had to include our flights, car hire and accommodation. Could it be achieved?

We agonised over numerous tours to arrange the best itinerary. We knew certain things could not be missed but we had to fit this around a family holiday. Travelling all the time would be a recipe for disaster. The children would be bored and it would be unfair to them. We had to choose hotels with good indoor leisure facilities. We selected our hotels from the big chains — Hilton, Holiday Inn, Marriott and Best Western.

Bookings could be made via central reservations mainly on freephone numbers in the UK. All the leading chains accept cancellations up to the anticipated arrival date without charge so this gave us the flexibility to alter our route. Without exception, no one ever volunteered the cheapest room rate. I always had to ask. All the rooms accommodated five people and some charged a nominal rate for an extra bed in the room. The average cost per night for accommodation and breakfast for us all was about \$85 (£55). The prices were significantly cheaper

than booking through a travel agent. We landed in Phoenix, Arizona at 8pm in 80F to begin our journey to the Grand Canyon. After collecting our hire car and stopping overnight in Flagstaff, we set off on a scenic drive to visit one of the great wonders of the world. The Grand Canyon is operated by American National Parks and for £16 you can buy an annual permit which enables you to visit every National Park site in America.

Even though we were only visiting for two weeks, it was cheaper to do this than to pay separate entrance fees. As we drove around the South Rim, wonderful views greeted us at every turn but it was cold and we didn't envy the many walkers who venture into the depths of the Canyon.

Our route then took us through the Painted Desert to Monument Valley through the Navajo Indian Reservation. You can drive around Monument Valley on your own but with three noisy kids and a hire car, we opted for a four-wheel drive tour. It was fantastic — it looked just as it does on all the films.

After two days of canyons and monuments, however spectacular, we had to have a variation to keep everyone happy and Page on Lake Powell, one of the largest man-made lakes in America, provided the ideal stop. Lake Powell looks like a lunar landscape and in the summer is overrun with tourists. At Easter it is deserted and in warm sunshine we hired a speedboat for \$70 (£42) which gave us an exhilarating taste of the magnificent vistas.

The drive from Page to Bryce Canyon is one of the most scenic in America. Here we stayed in Ruby's Inn, one of the oldest, most famous hotels in the region. The canyon, with its pink needle-shaped rocks gleaming in the sunshine, the tops still covered in snow, provided another magical day. Here we saw deer and talked to people from all corners of the world.

We all agreed, however, that we had had enough nature and set off for the other side of America. Las Vegas has to be seen to be believed. The hotels have wonderful facilities and food is served at giveaway prices to encourage you into the casinos. Gaming laws are strictly enforced and children are not allowed to gamble or loiter in the casino areas.

We had a great time in Caesar's Palace — particularly in the Forum Shopping Mall, one of the best shopping malls in the world. Every hour, Roman statues "come to life" in a show with coloured dancing fountains.

We reluctantly left our hotel, the Flamingo Hilton, after three days but Disneyland beckoned. Driving through the Mojave Desert to Los Angeles, we faced blizzards. Later, in the middle of the desert, we passed the largest thermometer in the world — registering 38F.

Every parent pretends they are only going to Disney because of the children, but why pretend? We had a great three days there, went on every ride and met every Disney character. However, you should ignore what the guide books say about going in at the crack of dawn. The park is much quieter after



Many visitors choose to see the Grand Canyon on foot. The Silberstein family, however, admired the views from the comfort of their hire car

5pm, the queues are shorter and it is open until midnight, giving plenty of time to enjoy everything. We spent the days in the hotel pool, the Hard Rock Cafe and Rodeo Drive, and the evenings in Disneyland. We stayed at the Marriott in Anaheim, near Disneyland, because it offered an excellent family package with room, breakfast, Disney tickets and a free trolley bus to the park.

The last few days of our trip took us to northern California where we were back to natural beauty again in the Yosemite Park against the backdrop of the Sierra Nevada mountains. We had reserved a room at a Best Western in Oakhurst, only a few miles from the park. We had two days of incredible weather variations which only added to the excitement.

The first day we threw snowballs at each other among the highest Redwoods in the world and lunched as the mist descended early over the valley in the renowned Ahwahnee Hotel.

By late afternoon the sun had come out and the following day the temperature hit 75F. The perfect picture-postcard viewing made for one of the most memorable days ever. We had seen Yosemite Falls at their most magnificent.

San Francisco was our last stop and we were determined to end on a high note. The weather was perfect for the two days we were there. Our hotel was the Marriott at Berkeley, with lovely views over the Bay and the best

indoor pool of the holiday. We went to Muir Woods and saw the Golden Gate bridge at its most beautiful in the warm sunshine. The view to the prison at Alcatraz was spectacular and, of course, we did our own car chase down the steep streets including Lombard Street, the windiest street in the world. It was then time for our last-minute shopping at Fisherman's Wharf. We all decided we would love to live in San Francisco.

When we dropped the car at San Francisco airport we had covered 2,400 miles. It had been a wonderful holiday with so many high spots. It took a lot of organising but we agreed it was well worth it and we had achieved everything we had set out to do.

SANDRA SILBERSTEIN

HOW WE PLANNED OUR TRIP

What was your budget?

We set the budget for flights, hotels and car hire at £2,500 with £1,000 for food and entertainment.

How much did you actually spend?

The basic cost was £2,670, plus about £930 for extras. Total £3,600.

How did you choose an airline?

We teleaxed airlines and eventually used US Airtours (0161-483 8403), flying United Airlines.

What did the flights cost?

We flew from Leeds-Bradford via London to

Phoenix, Arizona, returning from San Francisco. Three adult return fares and two children's fares cost £1,750 — including two weeks' car hire.

How did you book hotels?

All our accommodation was reserved in the UK through Holiday Inn, 0800 897121; Marriott, 0800 221222; Best Western 0800 393130; and Hilton, 0345 581595.

How did you book cars?

Via Alamo Rent-a-Car by US Airtours (above).

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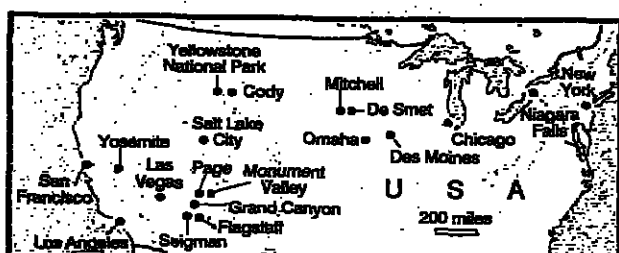
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... while a more mature party crosses from coast to coast by coach — two *Times* readers tell their stories

We got plenty of kicks on Route 66



Our coach pulled up for a rest room and coffee break stop at a store on the banks of the Mississippi. A pick-up truck parked alongside and a pretty young woman got out. She looked at us with obvious puzzlement. "Where you guys from?" she asked. "England, Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, Australia," we answered. She laughed uproariously. "You've come all this way just to see Iowa?" She was still laughing as she swung the store door open.

It was the ninth day of our trip across America. We had left Chicago at 7.30am and were due to arrive in Sioux City at 6.30pm, a journey of 565 miles. We would lunch at Des Moines and have afternoon tea north of Omaha. It would be the longest day of the tour, but even in the rich farmlands of Iowa, despite the opinions of the locals, there was enough to prevent most of us from falling asleep.

It took 21 days to travel from New York to San Francisco via most of the favourite tourist spots — Niagara Falls, Mount Rushmore, Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Yellowstone Park, the Badlands. We covered 4,932 miles, crossed 18 states, took in 11 cities, seven national parks and four time zones. As we looked at Alcatraz from Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, even the accountant from Maidstone admitted that it had been fantastic value for money.

Was it, though, a way of "seeing America" that many potential visitors might wish to take up? Our own initial worries concentrated on three factors: our fellow travellers with whom we would be confined for 21 days — what would they be like? Then, how would those used to their own transport adapt to coach travel? And, was crime in the American cities we would visit as bad as statistics suggest?

A first glance around New York brought immediate reassurance. The people seemed well-travelled and sensible, and looked as if they had just completed a morning's walk in the Peak District and now wanted a good pub lunch. These first impressions were sound. Group members were mature and self-disciplined, but maturity brings its own priorities so that when we arrived at Gettysburg, there was a rush for the rest room in McDonald's and not the spot where Lincoln gave his address. We soon realised that

the relentless pace of the journey would make all but the most determined of free spirits blanch at the thought of so much driving. Coach travel, though, had its own discipline. We soon had a 6-7-8 routine: 6am wake-up call, 7am luggage outside room, 8am departure. Those who had done National Service found this regime rather familiar, but no one grumbled about it.

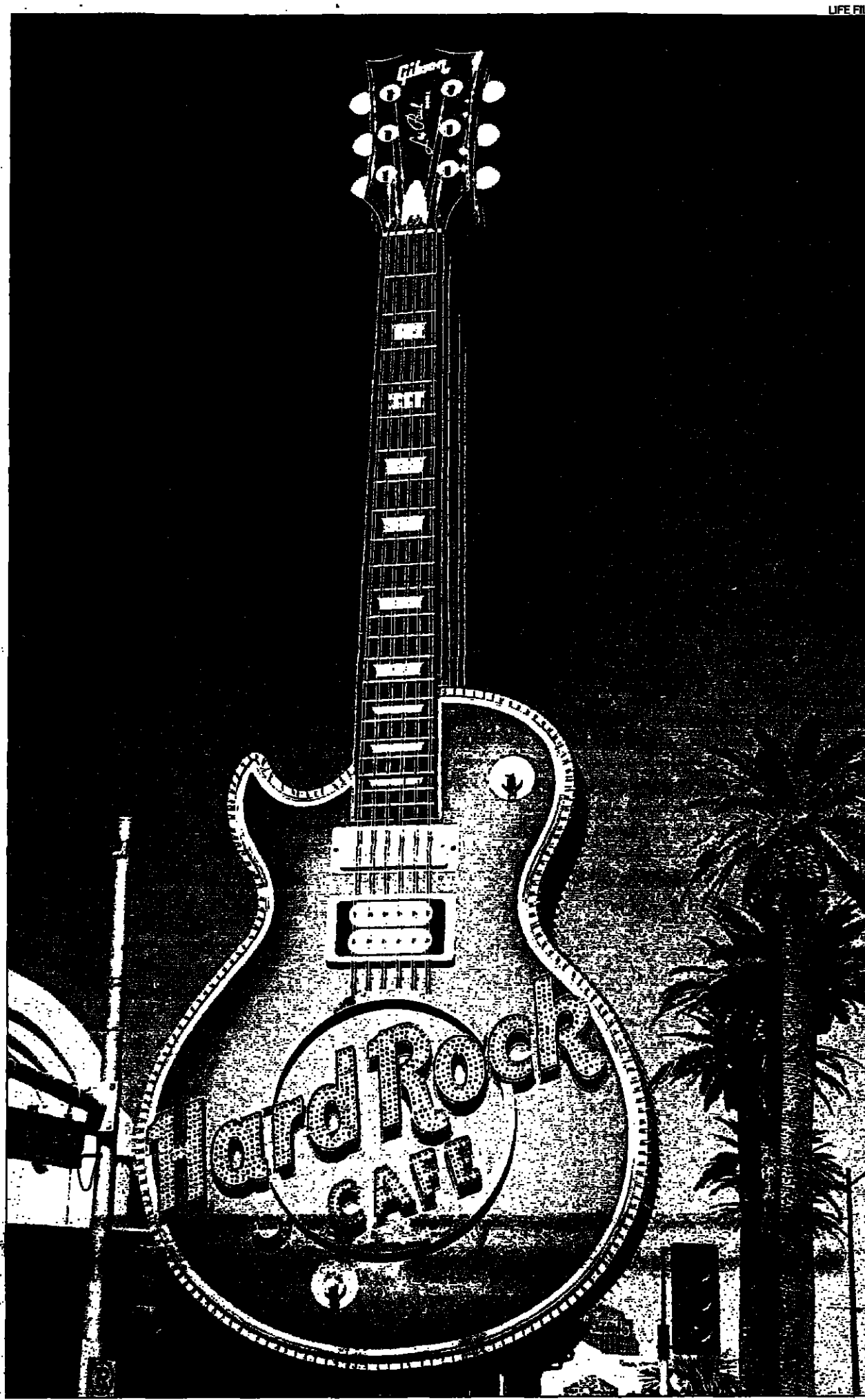
As for crime, our guide reassured us: "Practise a caution not paranoia." In New York we visited Harlem where we were told that it could be dangerous to draw too much attention to ourselves but Manhattan — Broadway, Times Square, Fifth Avenue — all seemed perfectly safe, in daylight anyway.

In Washington we were warned not to go into the eastern part of the city and in Chicago it was "don't go beyond the elevated railway" and "leave your luggage inside your rooms for collection tomorrow. This is, after all, Chicago". In Los Angeles a local map showed that our hotel, just off Hollywood Boulevard, was in one of the areas of greatest crime in the city. The sleaze only a hundred yards from the hotel was surprising. Nobody on the coach, however, had any trouble with crime, their evening walks were curtailed.

In such a disciplined, well-organised tour, it was surprising that serendipity played an important part. We found that, for only 50 cents, the Staten Island Ferry gave as good a view of the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and the skyscrapers of Manhattan as the tourist steamers charging £10. In Washington our guide somehow bypassed the long queues at the Capitol Building and took us to hear a debate in the Senate (it appeared that the CIA had "lost" \$4 billion).

We arrived in Cody, Wyoming, at 6pm and instead of settling down to a relaxing drink, we were driven reluctantly to the Buffalo Bill Museum. An hour and a half later we were equally reluctant to leave, having had a fascinating insight into the history of the West.

For some, there were minor adventures. At the Devil's Tower, a national monument with a complicated mythology, a rattlesnake joined the queue of ladies at the primitive lavatory. It was given priority. There was snow overnight in West Yellowstone, Montana.



You can't miss it — the sign for the Hard Rock Café in Las Vegas. American food becomes cheaper further west

yet when the air conditioning in the coach broke down en route to Las Vegas, the temperature was 105°F in not much shade. It was a severe test of the group dynamics which had been built up. Our party passed with Grade A.

Paradoxically perhaps, we were most impressed with that part of America which is normally viewed from a Boeing 767. Iowa was a state bulging from torrential rain and, with its green rolling country and obvious prosperity, it looked like a huge Cheshire.

South Dakota was more like a prairie state of imagination. Land had once been sold at five cents an acre and the settlers who passed through might have grabbed it with both hands, had they known of the "Badlands" further on.

For those whose children grew up reading *Little House on the Prairie*, and *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, South Dakota is Laura Ingalls Wilder country. She lived in the little town of De Smet and, as we drove down Route 90, we passed a signpost suitably inscribed.

One of the drawbacks to the way we had chosen to cross America was that diversions from the planned route were never contemplated. Some on the coach would have liked to have gone to Promontory Point to see where the transcontinental railway had been connected, but we drove steadily on to our next stop at Salt Lake City. Then again, those sites which were on the

schedule were meticulously visited. Mount Rushmore had to be seen on day 10, even if it was growing dark when we arrived. On day 12 we had to visit the Old Faithful Geyser in Yellowstone Park, even if we had to wait for 55 minutes for it to blow.

As we travelled west the rest rooms became a little more primitive, but with the trade-off that the meals became cheaper. At Lake Powell, south of Salt Lake City (the cleanest and probably the safest of American cities), we took one of the more ambitious optional excursions. We flew by light aircraft to Monument Valley to be driven around by a Navajo Indian called Jones, giving us a chance to discuss the life and hard times of Indians in America.

The resumed flight took us along the Grand Canyon. The view from the air must be one of the best on earth. Travelling from the piety of Salt Lake City to the sodomy and Gomorrah of Las Vegas and to unlovable Los Angeles reinforced our impression that this was a multi-layered society, and we were passing through it too quickly to appreciate it.

We stopped on Route 66 at Seligman, now a bypassed backwater, where even the proprietor of a shop selling Route 66 memorabilia was reluctant to discuss the future of his quiet town.

In Los Angeles our guide suggested that it was best not

to use public transport. The excursion to Disneyland (the happiest place on earth) did not impress our mature fellow travellers and most caught up on washing clothes or swam in the pool.

As we headed out to Ventura, Santa Barbara and Monterey the guide played the tape of Willie Nelson singing "On the road again, going to places I've never been, seeing things I'll never see again". It seemed entirely appropriate. Stout Cortez (more truthfully Bilboa) staring at the Pacific for the first time, must have felt the same as we did as the ocean came into view. We had made it from sea (all right, the East River) to shining sea.

In San Francisco we had our last city tour — Nob Hill, Lombard Street, the Golden Gate bridge, Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf and there, looking well within swimming distance, was Alcatraz. It was time to swap addresses and in a quiet moment to check Baedeker, to confirm that we had seen just about everything that the book recommended on our route.

Weeks later we were still discussing the beauty of Washington, the surprisingly pleasant view of the Chicago skyline from Lake Michigan, the splendour of the Grand Teton Mountains and the strangeness of housewives playing the one-armed bandits in the local deli near our hotel in Las Vegas. It was a holiday that would not be forgotten.

BRIAN WALLEY

AMERICA FACT FILE

■ We booked with British Airways Holidays (01293 723121) and flew from Heathrow to New York, returning from San Francisco. Free flights from provincial airports to Heathrow were included in the tour price. Other airlines, such as Qantas, Virgin Atlantic, Lufthansa, American, Air New Zealand, KLM and United, also act as agents for the coach operator, as does Kuoni. The operator was Americantours International Inc. with offices at 6053 West Century Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90045. It is advisable to book a tour with an English-only guide, to avoid listening to information in two or more languages. Jetsave (01342 327711) are agents for a similar tour.

■ It cost £1,569 each for the trip, including accommodation, city tours and visits. In 1997 it will cost from £1,752. Meals and optional excursions are extra. American breakfasts are great value for money at around \$10 (£6). With a sandwich lunch and evening meal, the daily average for food worked out at \$30 (£18) each. Optional excursions seemed slightly expensive. The light aircraft trip to Monument Valley and the Grand Canyon cost £125 each, but was well worth it. Recommended tips were \$2-£3 (£1-£2) for the guide and \$2 for the driver, per person per day (paid at the end).

■ The standard of hotels was excellent with the Omni Shoreham in Washington, the Las Vegas Hilton and the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn, Detroit, being outstanding. Holiday Inns featured prominently. The Hotel Edison in New York had a good location, just off Times Square, but was not among the best for food or accommodation.

■ Luggage was collected from rooms and delivered to them at the next hotel. Nobody lost any or had any damaged. Few hotels had tea/coffee making equipment. A traveller's kettle, set to American voltage, was useful and permitted in the hotels. An iron and board were sometimes supplied.

■ Sufficient comfort stops were made to suit mature travellers, though many of these were at McDonald's (always clean) but occasionally at a rather primitive garage or general store. There were some very long days, with departures at 7.30am and arrival after 6pm. This was physically demanding, which older travellers might find tiring, even a little stressful.

■ Clothing. Mainly casual, even in the most sophisticated dining rooms. It snowed in early June in Yellowstone and was 105°F in Las Vegas three days later. It rained heavily in Iowa. A thick jersey and lightweight shirts and trousers/skirts were all essential, with comfortable walking shoes. Items that could be washed and dried overnight would be preferable.

■ The coach was air-conditioned and comfortable and the standard of driving was excellent. Compulsory daily seat changes were an advantage, ensuring that nobody had a view slightly restricted by a window pillar for longer than a day.

■ Overnight stops were: New York, Washington, Buffalo, Toronto, Detroit, Chicago, Sioux City, Rapid City, Cody, West Yellowstone, Salt Lake City, Bryce Canyon, Grand Canyon, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Ventura, Monterey and San Francisco.

■ City tours included were: New York, Washington, Toronto, Chicago, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Visits included to Philadelphia, Gettysburg, Niagara Falls, the Henry Ford Museum, the Sears Tower (Chicago), Badlands National Park, Mount Rushmore, Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody, Old Faithful Geyser and Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone National Park, Lake Powell, Hoover Dam and Cannery Row.

■ Crime. The guide gave excellent advice on avoiding potential crime areas in the big cities.

■ Reading: *The Travel Bookshop* (0171-229 5260) recommends: *USA, The Rough Guide* (£14.99, ISBN 1 855 28161 X), *Four Great Novels*, by Dashiell Hammett (Pam, £9.99, ISBN 0 330 26850 3), *Road Trip USA*, by Jamie Jensen (Moon, £14.95, ISBN 1 56691 036 6).

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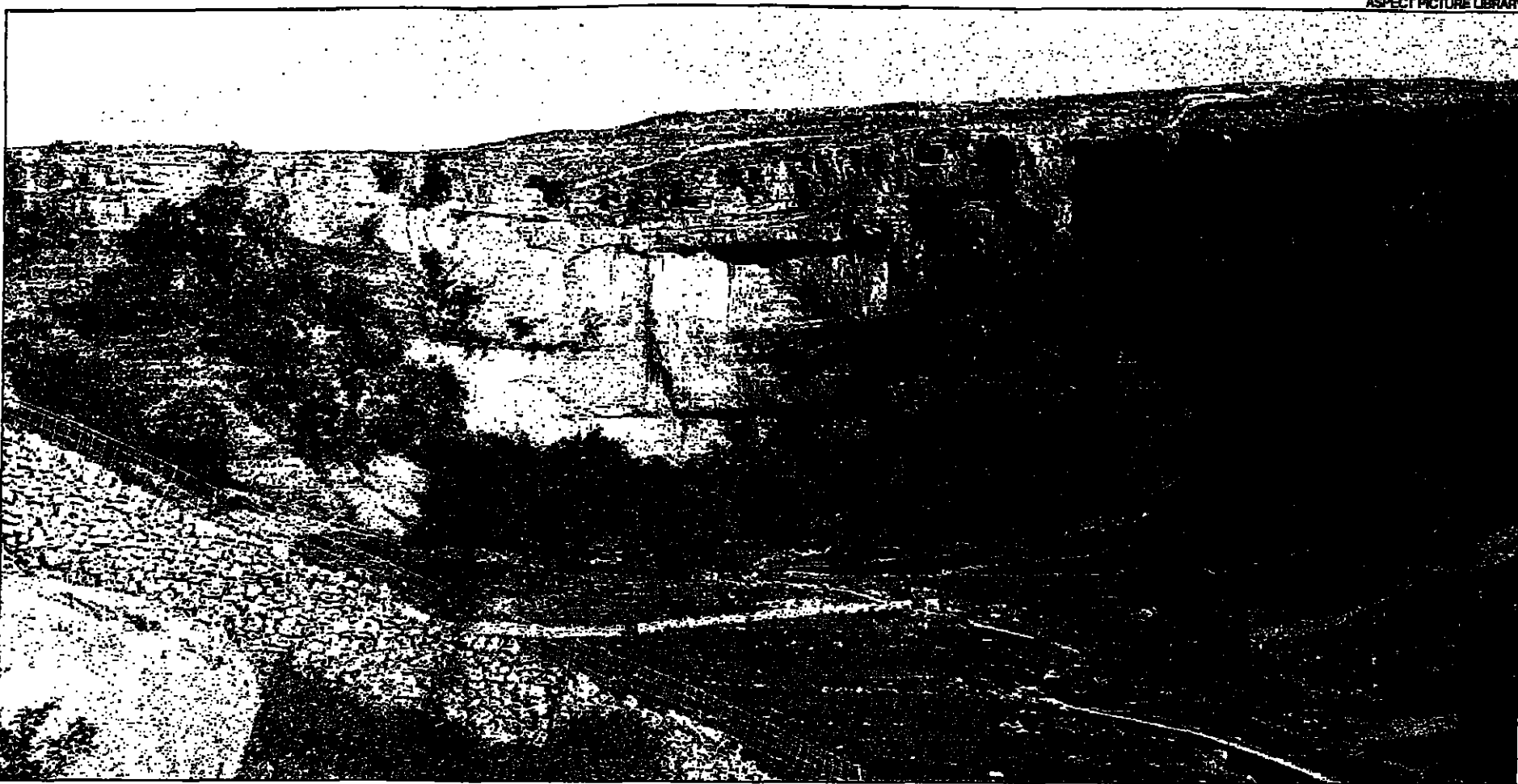
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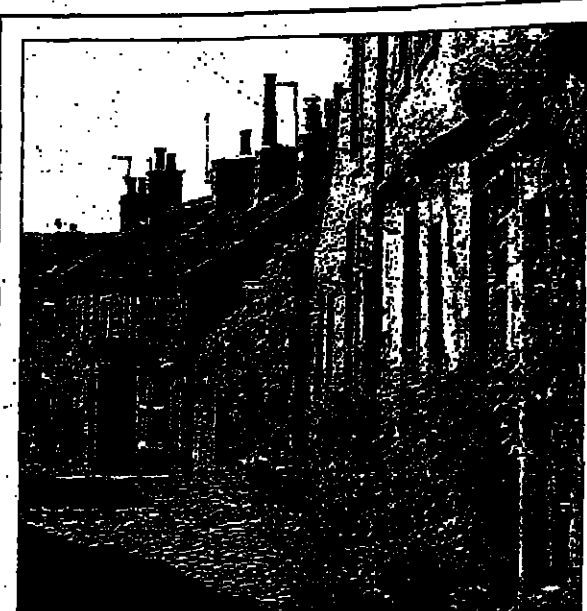
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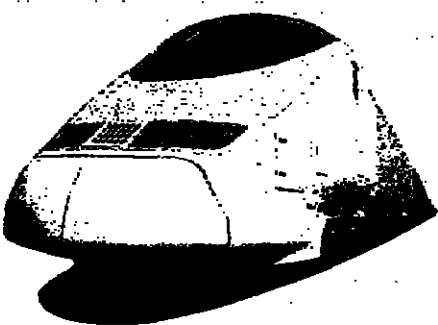
DALES FACT FILE

■ Romantic gourmet weekends at 42 The Calls, Leeds LS2 7EW (0113-244 0099, fax 0113-234 4100), cost £271 per couple for two nights' bed, breakfast and dinner (not including wine). On the first night, guests have a three-course dinner at Brasserie 44; on the second night, a three-course dinner at the neighbouring Michelin-starred restaurant, Pool Court at 42 (0113-244 4242).

■ Theatre tickets are included in the price for shows at the Leeds Grand Theatre or the West Yorkshire Playhouse, subject to availability.

■ Walk details: Ordnance Survey Touring Map and Guide 6, "Yorkshire Dales".

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Pity about the pud

A romantic gourmet weekend in Leeds? Remembering comedian Harry Enfield's Yorkshireman quip, "Don't talk to me about culture, I've been to Leeds", it was something not to be missed — a rare opportunity to ramble through the beautiful Yorkshire Dales, indulge guiltlessly in my love of good food and visit the theatre. It couldn't have been more cultural.

Naturally, I felt duty-bound to test out the "romantic" bit, too, and so it was that Tom was dragged up north one chilly autumn day.

We discovered a fine city with superb civic architecture, earning it a high ranking on my list of favourite weekend-break destinations. Like most big university cities, it boasts clusters of trendy shops and cafes, and an array of upmarket shops, which proved fertile hunting-ground for a friend's wedding present.

By early afternoon we realised we had to shed some calories before our first gourmet onslaught. Tempted by a spot on the map marked "waterfalls", our walk was to begin at Grassington, a village on the north bank of the River Wharfe, up the B6265 from Skipton. We parked the car in

nearby Linton to check out the claimed waterfalls. Linton Falls was a modest cascade. The view was best admired from the footbridge, where a few excited chaps had gathered to take photographs. Sadly, Linton Mill, which used to stand above the falls, has been replaced by unsympathetically modern houses.

The footbridge led us swiftly into Grassington, where we started our walk proper. We climbed the main street into village, then bore left to pick up the footpath for Conistone, the next village going north along the river. Once through the farmyard of Town Head, a 200-year-old stone farmhouse, we came to open countryside.

A right-hand fork looped us away from the river, over several stiles, to the site of a medieval village, the only remnants of which were a scattering of limestone cobbles dotting the ground.

Seeing Bastow Wood loom in front of us, we hauled ourselves over a stone wall on the left and headed straight in. We got a bit lost, because of the lack of a clear path, but wound our way through fairly dense woodland which led us, magically, to open, sun-filled patches of grass. Earlier in the day, the edges of these lovely glades

would have made perfect spots for a picnic.

It was time to head back to the river, through the adjoining nature reserve (Grass Wood). Because I adore river walks, the easy stroll downstream along the banks felt like the pudding at the end of a meal. It was incredibly scenic — wide meadows away from the road, jumping fish, and impressive rapids at a huge twist in the river's course (another good picnic spot).

Including stops and dithering, the walk took about three hours, and we felt we had earned our dinner, which was to be taken on our first night at the Brasserie 44 and the next day in the neighbouring restaurant, Pool Court at 42.

In both, the food was astonishingly good value. The Michelin-starred restaurant's melting *tarte tatin* was the best I have tasted.

Friends have also benefited from our gastronomic experience, because we have been eagerly copying the curried

mussels with saffron and pasta ever since.

The only downside was that the meal at the brasserie was suspended after the second course for an outing to the West Yorkshire Playhouse, where a vulgar production of *King Lear* was being staged. We returned to our tables after the performance, but couldn't face the pudding after watching Warren Mitchell wave his crown jewels at the audience.

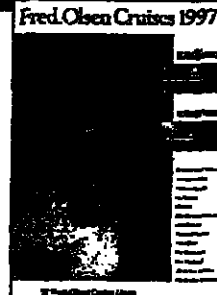
Still, a gourmet weekend it was, even down to the breakfast, made memorable by spongy waffles and warmed maple syrup.

For Tom, highlights, along with both meals, included stereo speakers in the bathroom and a compliments slip tucked under the windscreen wiper of our rusty old banger... which goes to show that, despite the grand "romantic gourmet" tag, it's the little things that leave the deepest impression.

ANJANA AHUJA

■ The author was a guest of 42 The Calls.

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The villa, available for holiday rental for the first time, sleeps eight, and is furnished with antiques and works of art. A pool, four-acre grounds and the services of a butler are included in the weekly rental starting at £3,225.

In a more rustic setting, Al Carli, a restored farmhouse in the Luccan hills, once owned by the film director David Lean, sleeps ten and costs from £1,475 to £2,825 a week. Both houses from International Chapters (0171-722 9560).

Two-tier TGV

FRENCH Railways (0990 300003) has introduced the first double-decker TGV on its Paris-Lyon service, thus avoiding the shortage of capacity during peak travel times. There are several departures each day, which will increase when more of these modern trains are delivered. The time of the journey is about two hours 17 minutes. The single fare starts from £32.40.

Mosquito tour

THE Mosquito Coast, named not after the insect but the Mosquito tribe, descendants of the inter-marriage between slaves and the indigenous Sumu tribe, as well as the Mayan

ruins at Copan and the Bay Islands are highlights of Reef and Rainforest Tours' (01803 866965) new itineraries in Honduras. They're aimed at adventurous travellers prepared to travel by mule, sea kayak, dug-out canoe, raft, and even a railway handcar.

Sixteen-day tours start at £1,395, but this price does not include international travel, which can be arranged.

Cabin caper

IN A original brochure, New England Country Homes (01798 894661) offers inclusive holidays in traditional shingle or clapper cottages (Mark Twain wrote in one of them), log cabins in Vermont's backwoods, and Ocean front mansions overlooking Cape Cod.

You can fish from your living room at Page's Pond, a converted watermill beside a waterfall ten miles from Yale, where six sharing the property for a fortnight would pay between £717 and £1,059 each. A rustic late Victorian home with a 200ft private beach, Long Island Sound, costs from £1,373-£1,603 for each of eight. All prices include return air fares, car hire, and overnight stops in Boston, and insurance.

Short break

INNTRAVEL (01653 628811), the firm that comes up with those reasonably priced auberges, offers year-round short breaks across the Channel by car, Eurostar, TGV or air. Two nights B&B in the luxury Amigo Hotel, just off Brussels

JILL CRAWSHAW'S INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TIPS

Grand Place, costs £208; similar weekends based on the Paris Hotel Lauret Opera, the former private residence of Toulouse Lautrec, costs £170, or at the art deco Hotel Elysée Ceramic, £166.

Two nights in medieval Bruges, at the delightful little Prinserhof, a former nobleman's mansion, costs just £110, which includes B&B and ferry crossing for car and passengers.

Villa view

SPECIALISING in Catalonia and the unspoilt parts of the Costa Brava (the stretch from Tossa to the French border still has some of the most delightful resorts in the Med), Spanish Harbour Holidays' (0171-966 9777) new ventures for 1997 include the villa with a view, the Villa Balanca, overlooking Cap Begur, costing from £595 per week, per property sleeping ten.

In the Pyrenees, a week's B&B at the converted Relais & Châteaux mansion, Hotel Torre Del Remi, starts at £590 each. Transport is not included in these prices, but the firm can arrange flights or Channel crossings.

Worldwide

FOUR airlines, Air New Zealand, Ansett Australia, Malaysia Airlines, and Virgin Atlantic offer a range of round-the-world air fares from £777 to £973, the fare depending on the number of stop-overs. A Wanderer Fares brochure explaining the option, is available from the airlines or selected travel agents.

Au naturel

NEW natural history courses from an environmental charity Field Studies Council (01743 850164) include an 18-day Ethiopia Experience from Lake Tana to Mount Dimu in November, visiting five major habitat centres such as lowland savannah and steppe grasslands, volcanic hot springs, and tropical forests. The cost is £2,250 fully inclusive. A new European tour, Birding In The Baltics: Wildlife And Culture In Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, costs £1,620.

Canary hop

MUNDI COLOR (0171-828 6021) offers an extensive island hopping programme in the Canary Islands of La Palma, El Hierro, Fuerteventura, Lanzarote, Gran Canaria, and Tenerife, with special £45 flights linking the islands.

Discount tent

CAMPING holidays in France and Spain are getting cheaper — especially if you can go before mid-May or in September.

Brittany Ferries with a new French and Spanish campsite programme offer a family of two adults and four children under 18 at the Raguenes Plage camp site in Brittany — a two-week tented holiday from £195 — which includes the crossing on one of their ferries, sailing from Portsmouth, Poole, and Plymouth to Caen, Cherbourg, St Malo, and Roscoff, and to Santander in northern Spain. Two weeks with French

Country Camping (01565 626266) at Le Camp de Florence in Armagnac country, with its own swimming pool, restaurant, and sports facilities, cost from £241, including ferry crossing.

Cheap golf

AN IMPROVED exchange rate and cross-Channel competition have cut the cost of golfing in France. The Cresta Holiday (0161-939 1311) "Golf in France" programme, offers a seven-night holiday at the four-star Residence Royal at La Baule from £242 per person (based on four sharing), including the ferry crossing, and six free rounds of golf at a choice of courses.

Honeymoon

MARRAKESH'S La Mamounia Hotel is offering special three-night breaks during 1997; and SPA package with massage, manicure and Hammam sessions costs about £330; a golf break from £372 and a honeymoon and anniversary package £589, flights not included. Details from Leading Hotels of the World (0800 18125).

Childcare

SIMPLY Corsica (0181-747 3580) offers a child-care service for children aged from six months to ten, staffed by qualified British staff, for £55 for five half days, or £95 for five days.

CORRECTION

CONTRARY to the report on December 14 on Sanda's Royal Bahamian Resort and Spa in Nassau, watersports are included in the price.

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Norway: Remote fishing villages are found along a stunningly beautiful coastline where the cod is king

Fish are jumping, the cotton is high

Perhaps you have to be a fisherman truly to love fish. Or a Norwegian. I have reached this conclusion after a conversation with an affectionately drunken fisherman who sat next to me in the little plane which took us up into the Arctic Circle — from Bodø on the Norwegian coast to Leknes in the Lofoten Islands.

He was about to join a factory vessel for 30 days' sobriety and summer fishing under the mid-night sun and, in a mood to be romantic, kissed his fingers in anticipation of a superlative flavour and sniffed the air in appreciation of an aroma. He was describing a dead cod: he might have been talking about a good wine.

Declining an invitation to accompany him up into the Baring Sea, I pointed out rather crassly that, mercifully, being a fisherman was not such a dangerous occupation any more. He fixed me with the look of a dead flounder and said, reproachfully, that it was perhaps not as dangerous as in 1842, when more than 500 fishermen, working from shoals of five-man boats around the Lofoten coasts, were lost in a single storm. Not that dangerous but there are still risks, like the time up near Spitzbergen when they lowered the anchor and one of the crew caught his sleeve in the chain as it unwound and was dragged 30 fathoms down to the sea bed.

"And you know what we did then?" he asked. "We stopped and had a cigarette. And we thought about him. There was nothing else we could do. In the Arctic water he would already have been dead. And that night, when we pulled in the anchor, up he came too."

Every visitor should have this kind of introduction to the north of Norway, this reminder that the blade which carved this coastline of mountains, fiords and islands into the most unspoilt corner of Europe, also fashioned its people in flint. No wonder they revere their fish up here. They have paid for them.

Today, one tenth of the population of Norway, more than 400,000 people, lives north of the Arctic Circle. And though there are now other industries — oil and gas

offshore, hydro-electric power and forestry inland and, increasingly, tourism in the Lofoten, it is still fishing and the mighty cod to which the majority owe their living, the relatively warming pump of Gulf Stream which makes life possible.

Inevitably the way to an extended weekend in northern Norway is through Bergen, 550 miles to the south, a perpetually washed, pretty town of white, pink and peppermint clapboard houses, caught between the outstretched fingers of seven fiords, in the shelter of seven pine-wrapped mountains.

Bergen was controlled commercially in the Middle Ages by the Hanseatic League and its hereditary warehouses on Bryggen, the port are still the centre of town. It has always looked outwards for adventure, so it is no coincidence that Bergen looks like a small New England town.

Yet although many voyages began in Bergen — not least those of the Vikings — it is now the tiny Troll-like figure of Edvard Grieg sitting in his Victorian mansion and looking out across the fiord as he composed, which suggests the more appropriate image for this very proper, modern little city. (I would not necessarily recommend it, but those interested in musical shrines can look around Grieg's home, see his Steinway and manuscripts. The only things missing are his gold records.)

To most imaginations the Vikings would have looked more at home further north in the Lofoten. Until recent years, the Lofoten were a group of half a dozen or so separate islands and although the bigger ones are now linked by road bridges and tunnels, this is still the Norway of legend — remote and shimmering in its cleanliness, tissues of snow caught in the mountain crevices even in high summer, and clusters of wooden dolls' houses sitting on stilts which clutch the sharp sides of the fiords.

For our days in the Lofoten we stayed at the tiny fishing village of Mortsund in a renovated *rorbu*, one of the rust-coloured buildings which litter the coast, built as dormitories for the 35,000 fishermen who once trekked here annually for the cod harvest, now redesigned as shelter for the har-

vest of tourists. Situated midway along the archipelago is stark Mortsund, with its characteristic rows of gibbets from which the cod are hung out and dried before being shipped as a delicacy to Italy (more than half a million square metres of the Lofoten are covered in hanging fish in spring).

More beautiful are the little fishing ports of Reine, Nusfjord and Henningsvaer, where fields of buttercups, bog cotton, harebells and red clover are mirrored in the colours of the cottages and their inevitably attendant boats — because although there are roads up here now, the sea is still often the easiest way to travel.

As no Norwegian will ever tire of telling, the Vikings were the classic examples of that, so it was worth a visit to the Viking museum at Borg, a recreation of the largest chieftain's house ever discovered and built, interestingly enough, exactly like a vast upturned boat. Fittingly, it was by sea that we left the Lofoten, joining the Hurtigruten (coastal steamer) as it made its way north along the coast, between the islands and fiords.

The description "coastal steamer" is misleading. Once the only contact between the Arctic ports, Bergen and the fishing villages in between, now the Hurtigruten consists of a fleet of large luxury cruise ships plying daily up and down the 1,250 mile coast, providing a bus service for locals and a scenic feast for tourists, and calling at a total of 34 ports along the way.

Unfortunately, we did not see any whales on our trip — a disappointment not entirely alleviated when we discovered one carved into steaks on our plates at lunch time. It tasted a bit like braised beef and was not as tender as the seal we had for supper.

Moving ever northwards, the character of every fiord is dictated by almost every passing cloud. In shadow there is a terrible remote bleakness, a cormorant on a jutting rock looking as doom-laden as an albatross, before a smile of sunshine brings an iridescent wash of colour, blues and greens, fringed here and there with strips of white Arctic beach. The coastal steamer



Bergen is a pretty town of white, pink and peppermint clapboard houses set among seven fiords

goes all the way around the top of Norway virtually to Russia, but at Tromsø, locally called the Arctic capital, we disembarked. Here, East meets West in its own way, poor rusty Russian ships tied up in the port for repairs which cannot be carried out back home, while the

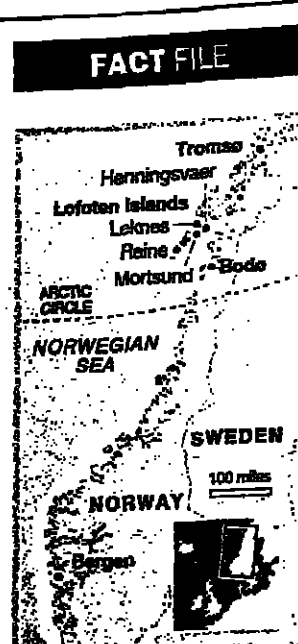
rich Tromsø pavements are kept clear of winter snow by underground electric heating.

These days Norway is enjoying a degree of affluence from offshore oil which would have been unthinkable 25 years ago. One day the oil will inevitably dry up. Little

wonder then that Norwegians fight so hard to protect their fishing rights. In 100 years that may be all they have again. Fish — and an unforgettable coastline.

RAY CONNOLLY

● The author was a guest of Innturvel



FACT FILE

■ Innturvel (01653 628811) offers a seven-day journey, from Garwick to Bergen, Bodø and the Lofoten Islands, flying with Braathens, from £699 per person sharing (an extra £191 for a single traveller). This includes three nights' accommodation on the coastal steamer (no meals included) in a two-berth cabin, four nights in a *rorbu* in Mortsund on the Lofoten, meals extra, and transfers from ship to airport.

■ The independent traveller can fly from Garwick to Bergen by Braathens for £190 return. The fare from Newcastle is £164 return, every day except Saturday. Flights from Garwick to Tromsø or the Lofoten Islands cost £342 return, plus tax.

■ Information on the coastal steamer can be obtained from the Norwegian Coastal Voyage, 15a Berghem Mews, Blythe Road, London W14 0HN (0171 371 4011).

■ Places to see: In Bergen: the Hanseatic Museum on Bryggen, the Trollhaugen, Edvard Grieg's house — concerts on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays in the summer. In the Lofoten: the stockfish museum at Sand on Valsstad, Nusfjord, Norway's most famous fishing village and a good place for hiking while on Vagan, Henningsvaer is becoming an artistic centre. In Tromsø there is the new Arctic Cathedral, a Lutheran church built like a triangular shard of ice. The most boring place is the planetarium, which is well worth a visit.

■ Things to eat: Fish in as many varieties and cooked in as many ways as you can imagine. Whale meat and seal for those of a less sensitive disposition.

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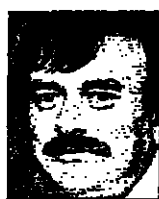
It's competition time: can you think up a decent title to replace the two letters that Ford's marketing people got paid lots of money to come up with?

What's a nicer name for Ka car?

We find ourselves at this stage of Christmas in the uneasy gap between receiving the V-necked blue one with short sleeves and exchanging it at Marks & Spencer for the round-necked yellow one with long sleeves. Or should we first return the contents of the large cardboard box presented to the seven-year-old (the dear little chap, who announced within five minutes of plugging it in that he needed more RAM, more gigabytes and a much faster modem?)

I know, next year you are going to Honolulu. I was going there this year, but you know how it is. So why not put aside cardboard boxes and videos you'll never watch again and instead do something useful. Enter our latest car competition, or Ka competition. It's a

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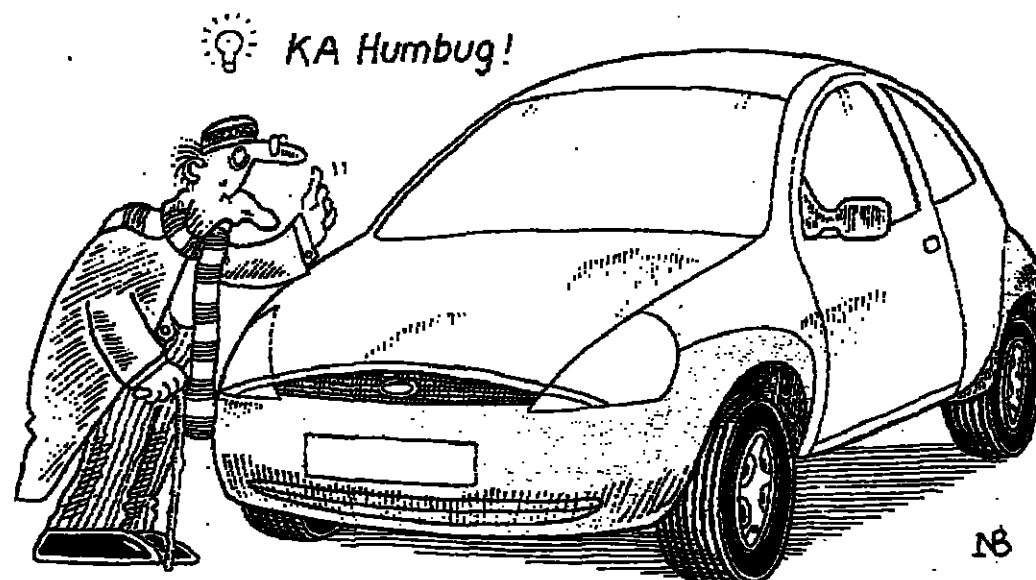
Peter Barnard

family game, if you insist, but Scrabble it ain't. If it was it would only score five for K and one for a. Yes, Ka as in Ford Ka, the neat little motor with the absurd little name. There is no such word as Ka, but then there was no such word as Mondeo until Ford built

one. The Ka already has a phonetic identity crisis, because Ford pronounces it Ka as in Khama Sutra, some of their customers pronounce it Ka as in Katmandu, while someone in the Ka's bizarre television commercial pronounces it Kar as in, well, car.

So what the Ka urgently needs is a nickname, something we can all pronounce. Which is where you come in. A distinguished panel of judges, or could not be recruited in time, so Alan Capps, editor of Car 96 (or Car 97 as it will become if we all live to see next week), and I will judge your entries and the winner will receive a magnum of champagne, which can be exchanged for a magnum of Tizer if you insist.

The first thing that has to be faced is that the Ka pronounced Kar will inevitably have a nickname longer than its real name.



No harm in that. It's unusual in football (Gazza for Gascoigne) but quite common among royalty (Phil the Greek for Philip). The point is that the Ka is a car which needs extract of alphabet soup added to its impressive list of extras.

For why? Oh come on. You cannot construct a legend out of something that sounds like baby's

first gurgle. When Alec Issigonis named the Mini he did not linger long at the desk of the man who said, I know, let's call it the Mi. When Messrs Rolls and Royce sat down over lunch in Manchester, they were not overly taxed in rejecting the notion that their first car should be called an Aaaaar-Aaaaar. "Bring the Aaaa-Aaaaar

round to the front James and quick about it," was a phrase they rightly saw as not so much tripping off the tongue as sticking in the gullet.

If the marketing boys and girls retained at vast expense by Ford were less obsessed with impressing their peers in wine bars, the Ka would not be in need of a nickname, but as an old friend of

mine at the BBC was fond of pointing out: marketing people steal your watch in order to tell you the time.

Well, it's about time sensible folk stole it back. By finding a nickname for the Ka (I am beginning to detest that word, aren't you?) you will be doing Ford an enormous favour, though holding your breath waiting for a letter of thanks and a free trip round the Dagenham factory is not recommended.

Nor is there much time to waste. In fact I would suggest you send in your postcards by first-class mail, for it occurs to me that Ford now owns Jaguar. Should you be passing my house and hear a shotgun go off, you will know that I have decided to end it all upon discovering that a bunch of nitwits have offered me a pre-launch test-drive of the new Ja.

So quick, before another decent motor gets to be called something that sounds like the triumphant sound emitted by a man executing a karate chop. Send your suggestions (maximum of three per entry) to Narnie That Ka, Car 97, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Entries addressed to The TI will be used to mop up coffee.

On company manners

Kevin Eason on the survey that highlights the need for our annual driver contest



Lease Plan discovered a host of wrong attitudes

Company car drivers are among the most intolerant and hypocritical on the road, according to a new survey for Lease Plan, Europe's biggest vehicle leasing company.

Lease Plan asked 500 company car drivers for their views on everything from crime to congestion and discovered motorists who travel far and wide but are prepared to break speeding laws to get to their destinations and who see almost every other motorist as a hindrance. Even though they know congestion is bad, they will refuse to take a train instead.

When asked who were Britain's worst drivers, 60 per cent of them labelled "weekend motorists" with another 45 per cent naming old people. After that, anyone with a caravan, lorry or Volvo was on the list of drivers considered the worst.

The sample came from drivers who covered an average 24,527 miles a year, 14,627 of which was on business, which indicates a large number of company motorists wedded to their cars for both work and private time, which accounted for about 40 per cent of their mileage.

The importance attached to a company car, with its lack of worry over running costs, servicing and repairs, was emphasised by the survey. In a list of priorities it ranked second only to a pension scheme, with nearly half of the respondents saying they would not take even a £5,000 rise as a replacement.

However, the importance of the car and the time they spend in it seems to have distorted the company car



Former Transport Minister Steven Norris launches the 1996 Company Car Driver of the Year competition organised by Lease Plan and The Times

drivers' view of the world, if the Lease Plan findings are anything to go by.

Nine out of ten decided that congestion on British motorways was serious, while 76 per cent decided that better trains and public transport was a way to solve the problem — except that when they were asked if they would trade in

their cars for a season ticket on the train, only 26 per cent said they would. Sixty four per cent replied with a definite no.

What company car drivers largely agreed on was a higher speed limit for motorways: almost half wanted it raising to 80mph, while a quarter wanted to be able to travel at 90mph. Even 45 per cent of those who admitted they had been stopped by police in the past said they would travel at 90mph if the motorway was empty.

Men were more likely to be stopped by police, with 52 per cent reporting they have never been questioned compared with 73 per cent of women. Only 16 per cent of the

company drivers admitted to having points on their licence although 5 per cent had more than one offence logged.

Just how accident-prone company car motorists can be is reflected in their reports to insurers. A fifth had made a claim in the past year and 36 per cent in the past five years. Younger drivers were most accident-prone with 23 per cent of motorists in the 17 to 34 age range making a claim in the past 12 months.

Two in five had an accident with another car in the past five years — and women were more likely to have accidents than men, according to the Lease Plan figures. Forty one per cent of women told Lease Plan they had a crash over the period compared with 35 per cent of men. Either company car drivers are very good or everyone else on the road is at fault, for only 23 per cent said the crash was down to them.

What the survey did show was that company drivers need training to cope safely

and comfortably with the long hours and long miles they spend behind the wheel.

Lease Plan, which will sponsor the fourth Company Car Driver of the Year competition with The Times next year, discovered that 64 per cent of drivers had never had training, even though they are, in effect, being asked to operate machinery worth £10,000 and more. Of the third who had been trained, 74 per cent said they definitely benefited, while eight out of ten expected to be offered lower insurance premiums.

However, there are some things that next year's Company Car Driver of the Year contest — which is due to be launched in March — will not be able to offer advice on.

When asked what was the most audacious thing they had done in their car, one in six company car drivers said simply: sex. Two even replied that they had sex while they were driving. Quite how they do not explain although we can only assume that adjustable seats and steering wheel would be essential requirements for such activity.

Skills needed for crowded streets

Government should teach older drivers new tricks, says IAM

IT'S HIGH TIME that drivers old and new faced an education programme to help them cope with modern traffic conditions, says the Institute of Advanced Motorists, Alan Capps writes.

While the theory test introduced this year caused some controversy, it has also created an upsurge of interest in how motorists learn to drive. But this still only applies to the newly qualified ones.

"What about the 20-odd million drivers who are finding traffic conditions becoming ever more demanding and for whom even their own 'L' test and the Highway Code are just a distant memory?" asks Michael Robotham, Chairman of the IAM, which in 1996 has been celebrating 40 years of trying to improve standards of driving on Britain's roads.

Mr Robotham said that road safety was based on three E's: engineering, education, and enforcement, but of late, education had become the poor relation. "It is time for a major driver-education programme which goes far beyond current drink/drive campaigns. It is clear from the spectacular success of those campaigns just how much can be achieved. Our firm view is that similar effort devoted to a wider range of driver-education subjects

could make a big impact on road safety."

Mr Robotham also had news of a move in the right direction. While for many years the IAM was regarded as an organisation serving worthy middle-aged people, more than 10 per cent of applicants for advanced driving tests through the IAM are now aged under 25. To mark its 40th year, the organisation has launched a series of

campaigns, using modern methods such as CD-Rom courses, to make more young drivers aware of the need for continuing training.

The call for a Government-backed education programme was made to an audience that included John Bowis, the Minister for Road Safety. Robotham pointed out that in 1956, when the IAM was founded, there were only seven million vehicles on the roads, compared with more than 25 million today.

● LONDON
A406 East Finchley. Traffic down to a single lane on the North Circular road between Hanley's corner (A1 Fulbourn Way) and Finchley High Road.
A406 Upper Edmonton. Major roadworks on Angel Road (North Circular Road) over the Lea Valley Viaduct to add lanes, flyovers and turnpikes.

A3 Kingston. Northbound lane closure on the Kingston Bypass between Shannon Corner (A298) and Coombe Lane junction (A238) for work on Carters Bridge.

A502 Westminster. Resurfacing work on Victoria Street at the junction with Great Smith Street and Broad Sanctuary.

A3212 Westminster. Bridge Street and Victoria Embankment closed 9pm-6am at weekends in places between Parliament Square and Westminster Bridge.

A224 Saint Mary Cray. Lane closed on Sevenoaks Way for sewer construction work on Leasons Hill.

● SOUTH-EAST
A4 Reading, Berkshire. Restrictions and lane closures for widening work between the Hogarth Roundabout and Bursfield Road.

A329M Reading, Berkshire. One lane closed in both directions from 10am-3pm over the M4 at Junction 10, between Reading and Wokingham.

A27 Brighton. Overnight (10pm-6am) maintenance work on the Brighton Bypass between Hangleton Junction and Ditchling Road Bridge.

A23 Patching, East Sussex. Lane closed on the slip roads, with various other local restrictions in place.

M27 Hampshire. Long-term roadworks with a contraflow in place between Southampton East and Fareham.

M25 Surrey. Restrictions and lane closures both ways between Godstone and the A3 as major widening work continues along the 19-mile stretch.

A3 Surrey. Hogs Back (A31), long-term roadworks at Stag Hill flyover. Various restrictions in place.

● SOUTH-WEST
A392 Newquay, Cornwall. Temporary lights on Tremper Road.

A3022 Brighthelm, Devon. Water main work under way between Cudhill Road and Town Hall.

A30 Victoria, between Indian Queens and Bodmin, Cornwall. Temporary lights for resurfacing work.

A35 Barmack Road, Christchurch, Dorset. Lane closed in both directions.

M5 Gloucestershire. Major roadworks with only one lane open at roundabout junction with A419.

M5 Gloucestershire. Contraflow across Avonmouth Bridge with a 50mph limit. Swindon, Wiltshire. Construction work on Fleming Way with restrictions between the Magic Roundabout and Whitebridge.

● MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA
A1 Aconbury Hills, Cambridgeshire. Reduced to one lane northbound at the A14.

A6 Leicestershire. Contraflow from just north of M1 J24 to Sawley Island, with no right turn into Dorington Lane.

A52 near Granton, Nottinghamshire. Temporary lights over Nottingham Road bridge. Diversions via B1174 and A507.

A500 Staffordshire. Contraflow on D-road between Talke and Stoke-on-Trent as roadworks continue.

● NORTH
A62 Chadderton, Greater Manchester. M66 construction work on Oldham Road at junction with Hollinwood Avenue.

A59 Macclesfield, Lancashire. Resurfacing work on Liverpool Road causing major hold-ups heading to and from Preston.

M1 West Yorkshire. Major roadworks continue around the Leeds junction with lane and speed restrictions. Delays on M1, M62 and Dewsbury Road.

● WALES
A482 Aberaeron, Ceredigion. Upper Aberaeron Bridge on South Road closed for reconstruction work. Diversions via Panteg Road and A470.

A470 north of Cefn Coed, Merthyr Tydfil. Temporary lights on Brecon road for major works. 40mph on A485 at Cefn Coed with temp lights on Aberdare Road.

M4 Monmouthshire. Lane closures between the Magor and Newport junctions.

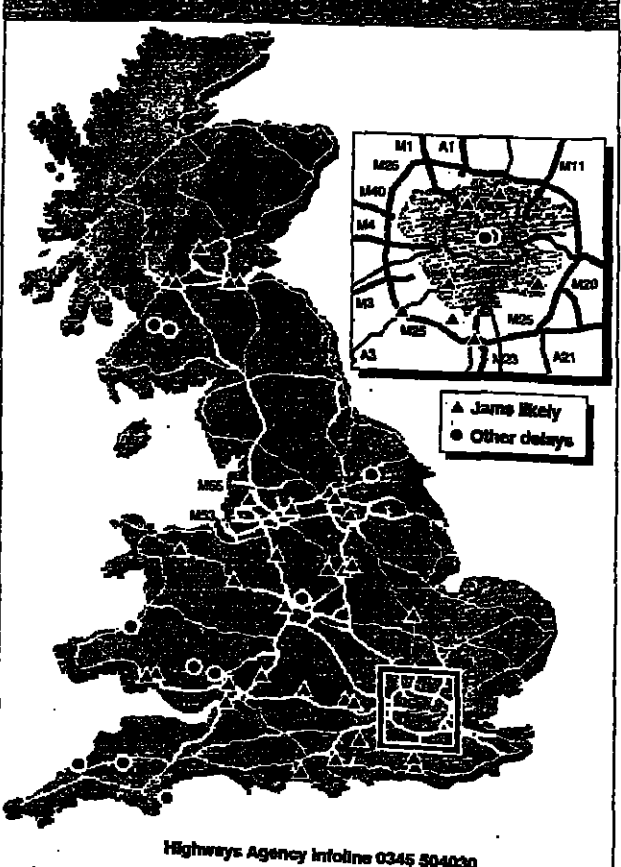
M4 Swansea. Carriageway reduced to one lane in both directions for roadworks between Swansea and Llanelli.

A472 Pontypool, Torfaen. Contraflow between Pontypool and Heron roundabout.

● SCOTLAND
M8 Edinburgh. Junction 2 Newbridge Spur (M9). Major roadworks, with lane closures on the roundabout.

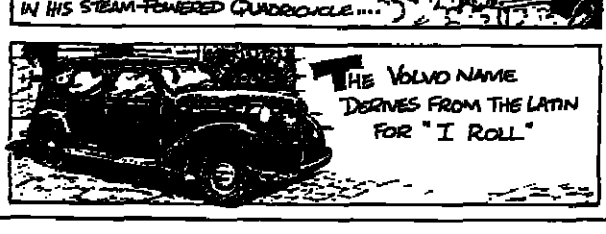
A9 Glenrobin, Perth & Kinross. Contraflow four miles east of Dunkeld.

A898 Eriskine Bridge, Renfrewshire. Bridge only open to car and light vehicles.



AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans

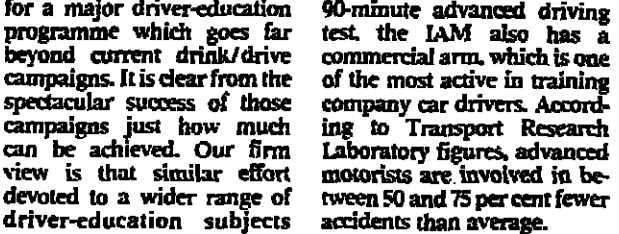
THE WORLD'S FIRST MOTOR RACE TOOK PLACE OUTSIDE PARIS IN 1887 AND WAS WON BY THE SOLE ENRANT, THE COMPTE DE DION IN HIS STEAM-POWERED QUADROUBLE.



THE LONGEST WAS THE 1947 GRAN PREMIO DEL NORTO RUN FROM BUENOS AIRES TO LIMA — AND BACK AGAIN.



ALBERTO ASCARI LOST THE 1955 MONACO GRAND PRIX AFTER ACCIDENTALLY DUMPING HIS FERRARI IN THE HARBOUR.



Hunters and their opponents are increasingly locked in a 4x4 off-road pursuit. Simon Hacker reports

Making tracks to save the deer

The scene is familiar from a thousand Christmas cards: the stumpy crop in some idyllic village or the pink-clad huntsmen in full cry across a snowy landscape. But the reality today is one of conflict, and the clash between hunters and their opponents is as likely to be reflected in their choice of vehicles as it is in their views.

The horse is now for the brave and hardy few. The majority of hunt supporters prefer the comforts of a four-wheel drive, to an out-driven thoroughbred. So if you want to follow a 1990s hunt, pursue the scent of diesel.

But not all who follow are followers. On the Devon and Somerset border, deep in the Exe valley and the surrounding dense forest, a well-scripted battle is under way. The semantics are of tooth and claw, but the real means of combat between the huntsmen and their long-term adversaries, the League Against Cruel Sports, now lie in the vocabulary of beefy badging.

In hunting's pink corner are Land Rover, Mitsubishi and even the odd Jeep, while the more politically red team is made up by Suzuki, Daihatsu and Toyota. The League's 4x4 stable for hunt monitoring is crucial to its strategy. From its off-road fleet it stays as close to the heart of the chase as possible, recording all the information it can and, crucially, waiting to witness any trespass on to League land.

Thanks to the growing strength of its membership, the anti-hunt pressure group has not only bought the vehicles but has purchased 2,000 acres of land, peppering the ancient hunting map with a grape-shot of no-go areas. Most of these, says its head of West Country Operations, Graham Sirl, centre around St Nicholas Priory, near Dulverton, Somerset.

The sanctuaries are scattered throughout prime hunting country and are often life-savers for a deer on the run — but they'd be of limited protection without our off-rovers," he says.

At the first tally-ho, the League looks to have a good head start. The hounds move off in search of their quarry, but the three-car team simply keeps moving and watching along the network of lanes.

From the passenger seat of the Suzuki Vitara JLC, Sirl's assistant Jill Nield, weaves a cancan, occasionally jumping out on to the verge and shouting a quick reel. In turn, she is filmed by a Jeep-driving lady parked close behind. But she seems unconcerned — being at the right spot quickly is crucial to maintain media interest.

Last season, images of a trespassing huntswoman responding to a call of nature more fundamental than hunting itself were flashed around the world — all thanks to the easy camera angle afforded by a lofty 4x4.

"If you follow the hunt in a standard saloon, you're unlikely to catch very much at all," Sirl explains.

Gory pictures of a kill are often declined by news editors, but recorded proof of trespass can land a huntmaster in court and lead to a possible injunction. But here's the catch: the League's team are well-known to the hunt's large body of car-bound followers.

Indeed most of them seem to be on speaking terms with the supporters. And while it may seem unfair to suggest that mobile followers would deliberately risk rural road rage by impeding the League's progress along the narrow lanes, mysterious 4x4 traffic jams are a frequent occurrence. If they were just passing through, Home Counties holidaymakers could be easily forgiven for thinking themselves on some muddy version of the M25.

"I can drive 100 miles in the course of a day's hunt," says Kevin Hill, the League's sanctuaries officer and keen Daihatsu Fourtrak man. "But you can end up stuck in a lane with nowhere to go."

Which is why all the vehicles are kitted out with a Phillips radio link. "We never stay together," says Sirl, "but we're in constant contact and use radio communication to pinpoint our positions because it's more difficult to listen in on than a standard CB."

League staff catalogue and report events which they say prove them to be as much a target as the stag they protect. "We have had a lot of petty theft from the vehicles if we have to leave them in a hurry, that's why the League badges we use are magnetic, so they can be quickly



Graham Sirl and Kevin Hill of the League Against Cruel Sports with their stable of vehicles: "If you follow the hunt in a standard saloon, you're unlikely to catch much at all"

removed and make the vehicles less noticeable," says Hill.

Despite the radio commentary and the ebb and flow of followers' cars, it's hard to know what's going on in the motorised age of hunting. But by lunchtime, it becomes clear that the red deer — and the red team — have clinched victory. The pink team looked confident, but failed to score.

But in a local farmer's field, the Devon and Somerset Stag hounds

seem cheery enough as they box their horses and return to their off-rovers. Some even smile and bid good-day to the League observers as they drive away.

Janet George, spokeswoman for the British Field Sports Society hunts with the Wheatsland Fox Hounds, deep in the heart of Shropshire. Bramble, a trusty hunting hack, is her chief off-road companion, but the real workhorse is a 1984 petrol-driven, short wheel-

base Land Rover, in regulation "faded green".

"It's what we call 'deep and holding' country — perhaps because if you stray six inches off the road, you're in deep and maybe kept on hold for a long time. You need both a car and a horse that can plug mud and keep going."

When horse rider and car are not hitched in happy transit, the Land Rover serves as an excellent observation vehicle. "It's not an essential

for following the hounds by car, but a sturdy four wheel drive helps — you can park well clear of the road and entrances and you get a much better view of the hounds."

Back in Somerset, the end of a hunt often marks feeding time for the 100-strong herd at the League's St Nicholas sanctuary — another job for the 4x4. The League hauls a special mix of trace elements and vitamins to the deer with the help of a Toyota Hilux. Sanctuary worker

Kevin Dillon says a tough off-roader is crucial come tea-time.

"They are wild animals and it's important not to get too close. If they get accustomed to human contact it could be to their danger. So we need to move in with the feed and be away quickly. A four-wheel drive pick-up is just the job."

At a safe distance, the deer munch indifferently. After all, hunting these days is something that mostly happens on the road.

You can end up stuck in a lane with nowhere to go



Mitsubishi Shogun, Jeep Cherokee and Land Rover Discovery: "You need a car and a horse that can keep going"



Daihatsu Fourtrak, Suzuki Vitara and Toyota Hilux: "We use radio communication to pinpoint our positions"

Riders and drivers on the road to disaster

Brian Pedley on the dangers when two forms of horse power collide

Three years ago, Eleanor Hill achieved her lifetime's ambition of owning a horse. Now, aged 24, and after more than 14 years in the saddle, she vows never to ride again. One midsummer evening last year, on a quiet B-road near Warwick, a collision with a car left her prized horse, Terrapin, so appallingly injured that he had to be shot where he lay. With his back and both rear legs broken, the animal died in unspeakable agony.

Eleanor, who was thrown 15 feet through the air, still has nightmares. "It was bad enough going through all of that once, let alone every time you shut your eyes," she says. "My mother, who was riding with me, saw everything. She got covered in my horse's blood. I was her darling daughter and she thought I was dead. For her, it was horrific — but in a totally different way."

Every year, says the British Horse Society, at least 3,000 riders are involved in acci-

dents involving motor vehicles, with most occurring on sleepy rural roads. The consequences can be catastrophic.

Eleanor Hill was so deeply traumatised that she now dreads the open road and has had to abandon her career as a Press and Sponsorship Assistant with the British Show Jumping Association. "I could no longer actually cope with going to the shows because it was too painful. I have only recently stopped having counselling. I won't even walk my dog on the roads now."

When a car collides with a fully-grown adult horse, it strikes an awesome half a ton or more of bone and muscle.

"I even get motorists phoning me after they have been involved in a horse-related accident," says the BHS's Director of Safety, Lesley Billingham. "It's not only the horse and rider that are traumatised, but equally the driver because they have been confronted with the reality of it."

This year, the BHS joined forces with the Department of



Some motorists resent the presence of horse riders on the roads, but, while they would prefer not to use them, they often must reach bridledways

Transport for a campaign to persuade drivers to show more consideration towards horses being ridden and driven on the roads. Some 300,000 copies of a leaflet, *Horse Sense*, are being distributed. And the BHS is about to mark its Golden Jubilee with an even larger campaign, Road Safety 2000, to promote its own road safety test among Britain's three million riders.

For the moment, motorists are Billingham's principal target. Their sheer lack of understanding is the major problem, she says. "My own feedback is that drivers very often perceive riders as people with too much leisure time and probably too much money... and that they shouldn't be on the road at all. "But a lot of people are riding because it's their job. Any horses in work or in

competition need to be exercised. Even if they are leisure riders, what motorists forget is that they've probably been working hard all day. "Motorists and riders both share a responsibility to be aware of each other's needs, Billingham argues. "The leaflet has recently been addressed from the motorist's point of view. There is guidance in the Highway

Code, but it's aimed more at the rider. Riders prefer not to use the roads. Let's make that clear. But they have to use them in order to get to off-road facilities such as bridledways. "The fact that a horse is being ridden doesn't change his natural instincts. He's unpredictable. He's strong and easily frightened. The only way to meet a horse is to slow right down and to give a

very wide clearance before passing. "If the rider requests you to stop or slow down, there's usually a very good reason. Either they can hear or see something ahead that the driver cannot, or they can sense an impending reaction from their horse. "For motorists, the manoeuvres of riders are wrongly perceived as illogical or eccen-

tric. Why, for example, do horses always seem to be ridden in double file? "Someone may be training the inside horse to traffic and accompanying it with an older, steadier animal," explains Billingham. "Or the rider may be a novice or a young person — which is another good reason for having them on the inside. And if it's a big group of horses we actually advise to ride double file because it's easier for drivers to pass a shorter group than a long string."

Riders also tend to keep to the left, even when turning right. Again, Billingham and the BHS recommend this as precisely the sort of practice that saves lives. "A rider never sensibly puts his horse between two flows of traffic because the animal is easily panicked and there is no escape route."

Last year, a Kent-based company launched a sonic device for drivers to place in their vehicles to warn animals of their approach. The Animal Warning Alert was tried by Billingham and BHS members and found wanting.

"We passed horses and dogs on roads, but they didn't seem to react in any way. There's no way you can tell it isn't working because it's inaudible to humans. And I think, with a rider, you don't want your horse moving away if there's nowhere for it to go."

For the BHS, there can be no substitute for "horse sense". For one-time rider, Eleanor Hill, it will be for others to benefit from the campaign. "I'll never ride again... never," she insists. "I couldn't ever risk seeing another horse in pain."

The leaflet *Horse Sense* is produced by the Department of Transport in association with the British Horse Society, British Equestrian Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV9 3JL. Tel: 01203 080697.

As television car advertising moves into overdrive, Ian Morton learns how the message for the same wheels has to be carefully geared to national attitudes

Why Papa and Nicole don't go to France



Antipodean Bryan Brown sings the praises of Citroën and an Englishman takes his Rover 200 to New York, images in a market that has never been more creative, daring... or expensive. Now budget control is on the agenda

Handbag-sized hurricane Ruby Wax wields her mercurial talent in the cause of the Vauxhall Corsa. Laconic antipodean actor Bryan Brown pragmatises the virtues of Citroën. Peugeot's hero scoops a small girl from the path of a thundering truck. Father and daughter pursue their sunlit saga on behalf of Renault. An Englishman takes his Rover 200 to New York. Dynamic images whirl around the new Ford Ka.

And so on. No prime time commercial TV programme is complete without its car ad. Projections have never been more creative, daring... or expensive. According to the latest available figures, major car manufacturers invested a record £185 million in TV advertising in the UK last year, yet this year they had spent more than half that figure — £98m — by the end of the first quarter. It was the same story across the Continent. Last year the total TV ad spend in the ten main markets by the top 15 carmakers was nearly £1,100m; the first quarter total this year was £602m.

How long can it go on? As increasing competition forces the motor industry to look continually for financially beneficial shortcuts from shared research, development and manufacturing, the need for budget control is on the agenda for marketing departments too. A single commercial like that Englishman in New York costs £750,000.

So could new efficiencies be asked of a glamorous and apparently free-spending medium which most practitioners regard as an art form in its own right, and which is often at the mercy of matters beyond the control of the bean-counters — weather, quality of light, artistic temperament, illness? For British audiences the most recent ads have undoubtedly been the Papa and Nicole series. Conceived to launch the Renault Clio five years ago, it has been the "best repaid and most liked" campaign in Britain for three years, and interest in the characters has generated free newspaper and magazine editorial worth £1m.

And the campaign has done its job supremely well. For three years the Clio has made the UK top ten



Dramatic: Peugeot's hero figure saves a little girl from a truck

best-seller list, has been the biggest-selling imported range in a market where 60 per cent of new registrations are imports, and has been instrumental in doubling Renault's UK market share.

But the success of this copybook campaign also illustrates the greatest problem facing the TV men — the issue of nationalism. While the British adore Papa and Nicole and the series was also successful in markets from Holland to Chile, it was never acceptable in France.

The world of Papa and Nicole is France seen through British eyes — a quaint Peter Mayle idyll, a sun-drenched vine-clad France, says Douglas Thursby-Pelham, of Renault UK's London-based agency Publicis. "It is not the romantic France which the French know. You cannot exploit nationalism on its home ground by using national stereotypes."

Even after choosing the Papa and Nicole theme for English consumption, Publicis was at pains to avoid "gratuitous Frenchness," says Thursby-Pelham. "Frenchness only works if it validates the product. Berets and baguettes might be useful French symbols, but they do not validate the car. You have to say — this car will enhance your quality of life... and it's French. Nationality is one of the great universals of

advertising and is something you can export, but only if it validates the car's qualities."

So out went Frenchmen playing boules because they added nothing to product communication. Out went French dialogue because it would distance the audience from the message. Out went English dialogue with a French accent because it jarred.

The current Renault signature line "Voitures a Vivre" was dropped because most English would not understand it — though some signatures do work, points out Thursby-Pelham, and "Vorsprung durch Technik" worked for Audi in Britain "because it phonetically communicates strength and technology although nobody knows exactly what it means."

French TV advertising for Clio produced by a Paris agency used locations well away from France — New York, the Middle East, Moscow. In the Moscow ad a crusty Russian general in a gloomy limousine remarked on a Clio with a pretty passenger. Gruff, sardonic Russian dialogue between the general and his young driver followed. "With subtitles the ad could be run in any country," says Thursby-Pelham. "It was an example of getting round the language problem by emphasising it. We shall be seeing much more of that."

For Renault internationally the

TV AD SPEND

UK total '95 (1st quarter '96)
Renault: £7.59m (£8.58m).
Peugeot: £15.27m (£10.9m).
Citroën: £15.8m (£7.7m).
VW: £15.3m (£5.78m).
Fiat: £7.66m (£5.79m).
Rover: £16.6m (£5.3m).
Vauxhall: £27.9m (£9.54m).
Ford: £26.5m (£8.3m).
BMW: £4.92m (£1.25m).
Mercedes: £2.13m (£1.7m).
Volvo: £9.39m (£1.7m).
Honda: £4.67m (£4.39m).
Mazda: £1.81m (n/a).
Nissan: £15.9m (£8.48m).
Toyota: £2.19m (£3.28m).
Others: (£12.7m (n/a)).
Source: Optimedia, Paris



Whacky: mercurial Ruby waxes lyrical about the Vauxhall Corsa

puts across the generic values of the small car very well. But this is 'borrowed interest'. It means nothing in itself.

"Sex is difficult. What you can show in Scandinavia you can't get away with in Turkey. Legislation is a minefield of course. What is allowable in one country is banned in another. How you use children in advertising is a case in point."

"Nationality remains at the core of the subject. By and large the car consumer is pretty ignorant about cars, but he knows about marquis of cars, and the one thing he does know is where a car comes from. Therefore he accepts certain of its attributes because of its nationality, and makes automatic points of differentiation."

Whether you exploit this in advertising depends on whether nationality is relevant to what the product delivers. Going big on the Malaysian heritage of Proton would add nothing because being Malaysian signifies nothing to the consumer in terms of cars. Spanishness adds nothing to a car made in Spain because that country produces purely European cars.

"But everyone knows that established nationality informs the audience about the product. When you say your car is German, everyone knows that you imply Teutonic efficiency and robustness. Saying your car is French implies flair, individuality, a special quality of life. Saying your car is Italian implies performance and design in the pure sense where form follows function. A Swedish car brings with it an automatic awareness of safety. A British car implies tradition."

"In the UK, France and Italy, the audiences prefer images. In Spain there is a slightly old-fashioned attitude which inclines to the macho approach and likes the success implications of upper-medium and executive cars. Scandinavia has a preoccupation with safety. Italians like to see their cars going fast. In France and England we are more comfortable with stories into which the car fits — a softer sell, with the car as part of lifestyle."



Pastiche: the Nissan Almera is sold with a Professionals touch

most satisfactory TV campaign has been the ad for the Renault 19 — another Publicis effort — in which the car seduced a handsome young priest from his calling. An unlikely scenario maybe, but it avoided the pitfalls of nationality by centring on universally recognised symbols: a priest to personify virtue, a car to represent temptation. Dialogue was unnecessary.

"It was conceived to a central European strategy," says Thursby-Pelham. "We produced it for British television, but it went to 19 other

countries very successfully. Religion is thin ice in advertising, but this ad showed the dangers of prejudice. I thought the Catholic countries would not like it, but one of those that most adored it was Italy, where it was filmed."

"What was important was that for the first time we had started to think about Europe-wide needs. We contacted Renault agencies in other markets offering filming to satisfy their specific needs. They told us, we filmed, and they shared the production costs."

If you don't like my voice, you get the Big Ben Banjo Band

No Christmas holiday period would be complete without Sir Harry Secombe. The veteran entertainer, who celebrates 50 years in showbusiness in 1997, is recreating his role in *Pickwick* at the Apollo Theatre, Oxford.

Sir Harry, a popular presenter on Sunday evening TV programmes such as *Highway Songs of Praise*, made his West End debut at the Windmill Theatre in October 1947 shortly after he had been demobbed. He worked alongside Tony Hancock and came into contact with Peter Sellers, Spike Milligan and Michael Bentine.

Their development of a new form of radio comedy led to the Goon Show. They became part of the nation's heritage and were adored by millions, including the Prince of Wales.

How did you first learn to drive?

In 1940 when I was stationed with the army in Usk. I

demolished three concrete bollards in the market square. I was in a three-ton truck. The officer in charge passed me anyway. He made only one proviso: "Any time you are taking a vehicle out let me know and I'll stay in the barracks."

What was your first car?

A pre-war Humber saloon. I bought it from a member of the show I was appearing in at Torquay in 1950. I paid £40, which was £30 too much. If I drove over 25mph the windows wound down. I had to pay £5 to have it towed away.

What car do you drive now and why?

I drive two: a Mercedes 500 SEL and a Jeep Cherokee. But never at the same time.

Do you like driving?

Around the countryside near my home, but not the journeys up to town.

STEERING COLUMN
Andrew Pierce
talks to Sir
Harry Secombe

What is your most hated car?

The Ferrari two-door F50. Because, at £329,000, I can never afford it.

What is your dream car?

I have already had it. A scarlet Thunderbird drop-head coupe with white leather upholstery which I bought new in 1950. Unfortunately, it was a left-hand drive and not very roomy, but the burble of its exhaust was sweet to the ear. I still dream about it.

What is your worst habit in the car?

Singing along with the music

on the radio. My voice is a safety hazard at close quarters unless the windows are open.

What infuriates you most about other drivers?

When they drive about 25mph and then speed up when you try to overtake.

If you were Secretary of State for Transport, what is the first thing you would do?

Restrict the times heavy lorries can come thundering into inner London.

What is the most unusual thing you have done in your car?

When filming in New South Wales, Australia in mid-summer I decided to drive to the outback for a family picnic. We found a lovely spot and I laid out the food on a tablecloth on the ground. Within seconds we were surrounded by hordes of flies and insects. It was the only time I

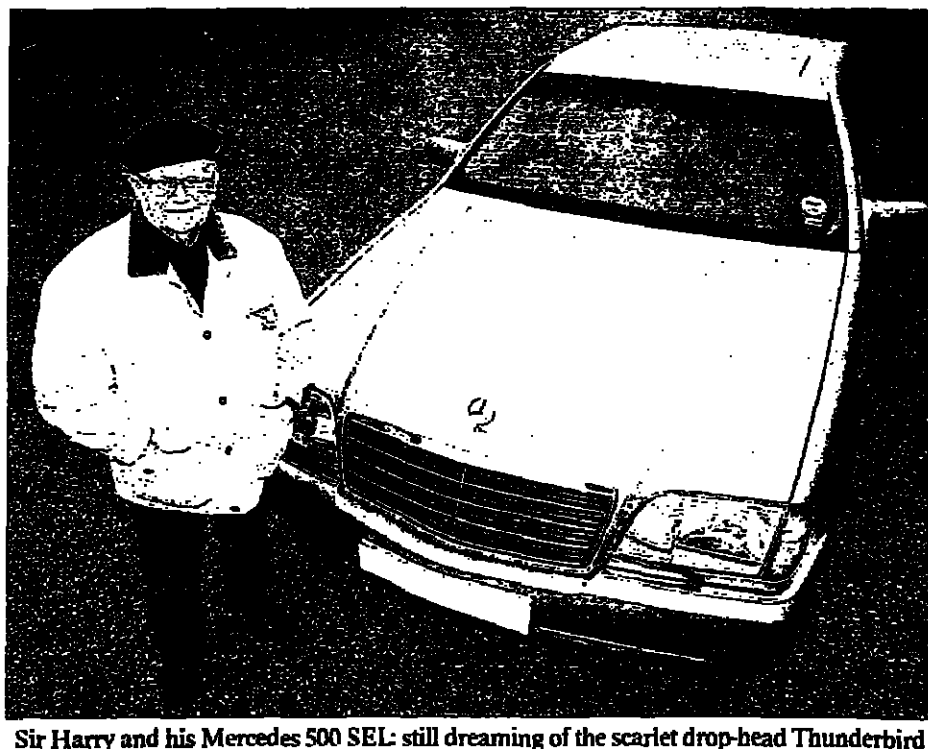
have had a picnic inside a car, with the windows wound-up, and an outside temperature of more than 100 degrees... and every biscuit a Garibaldi.

Have you ever had points on your licence?

About 30 years ago I was caught in a speed trap. It was a sunny day and I was singing along with *Housewives' Choice* on the radio. Suddenly a helmeted and bicycle-clipped constable nicked me for doing 40mph in a 30mph zone. After he had taken down my particulars, he asked for an autograph for his mother.

What do you listen to in the car?

I never miss the hourly news bulletins on Radio 2. Sometimes I play Viennese waltzes if my wife is with me because they are her favourites. If I have any recalcitrant passengers, I threaten them with the Big Ben Banjo Band cassette. It always works.



Sir Harry and his Mercedes 500 SEL: still dreaming of the scarlet drop-head Thunderbird

Trucker with his own fan club

Kevin Eason on the neat fleet of Edward Stobart, the best-loved and smartest haulier in Britain

They are like a green army on the move, forming a convoy that stretches from the north to the south of England.

As Britain settled back into the festive season, there was no rest for the regiment of drivers of Britain's best-known lorries. For Eddie Stobart is Britain's most famous haulage firm and the man who founded the business — Edward Stobart — Britain's undisputed king of the road.

He is the only trucker with his own 15,000-strong fan club, the only one who has a multi-million pound merchandising operation selling everything from hats to stickers, mugs to model trucks.

In fact, Eddie Stobart trucks are probably the only ones that most motorists who cruise the motorways could identify readily, thanks to their dramatic green, red and gold livery with the name Stobart picked out boldly along the sides. Even the drivers are different, the smartest on the roads at the insistence of the boss, who goes by the name Edward, not Eddie. They wear pale green shirts and jackets, even a tie at all times; slackening the tie or taking it off is a punishable offence within the Stobart organisation.

And the company is one of the fastest growing in the country. Edward started with a couple of trucks and now has nearer a thousand, making his company the biggest independent private haulage business in the country.

Without Stobart trucks, the supermarket shelves would have been empty of cans of beans, lagers and soft drinks this Christmas. Edward's trucks have shifted thousands of loads in the weeks up to Christmas in a unique — and most profitable — operation.

Stobart trucks pick up the empty cans from the manufacturers, then transfer them to Stobart warehouses for storage, then to the drinks manufacturers for filling and then on to the supermarkets. Edward's operation even puts the widgets in tens of thousands of cans. The business requires military precision and must not go wrong, otherwise the trucks end up in the wrong part of the country on the wrong day, or they set off empty



Edward Stobart with one of the model truck merchandising spin-offs from his smartly liveried thousand-vehicle haulage fleet. He started off in business as a schoolboy, selling sticks for firewood

when they should have a full load. A team of operators controls the lorries on a £250,000 computer system at a high-technology nerve centre at the Stobart headquarters in Carlisle, shifting lorries from around two dozen locations across Britain, and from manufacturers to supermarkets.

It is a business on a scale which could hardly be further from Edward's humble beginnings 26 years ago. Edward's father, the Eddie in the title, was a struggling agricultural merchant when Edward, the second Stobart child, was born in 1954. While the other

kids went off to Saturday morning cinema, the ten-year-old Edward Stobart was in business, collecting and selling firewood for three shillings a bag. Within two years, he was selling 50 bags a week and earning more than most of his father's drivers.

By 14, he had left school, a small boy with a stammer, labelled an academic failure by frustrated teachers. He joined the family business but was soon itching to go his own way, eventually splitting the haulage firm from the agricultural supplies business started by his father.

His work-rate became legendary, not just working in the office, but cleaning the lorries and driving loads himself.

As he queued with his truck for a consignment of cans at the huge Metal Box company, he helped other drivers lash down their loads. They thought it was a remarkable act of philanthropy — actually he wanted them on their way so he could load up and get in more runs than them.

The work was 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week; Edward grabbing a few hours of sleep on the

shelf of a filing cabinet in the office in between dashing out to hose down a dirty truck or volunteering to pick up a late load at night.

The punishing pace paid off though, and lucrative contracts — the first from Metal Box — came pouring in. Soon he had 20 trucks, then 50, then 100 and on and on until the green and gold livery became the best-known on the roads.

A few inquisitive letters, asking who ran these clean, smart vehicles turned into a torrent, demanding the start of a fan club: the Eddie Spotters. At motorway stops,

Stobart drivers are immediately recognisable in their uniforms and are often asked for autographs. The trucks stand out in a crowd — and if they don't, the drivers know how to attract attention — for they are taught to drive into a depot slowly and turn the vehicle so everyone can read the name.

Each lorry has a woman's name emblazoned on the nose, and now fans write in to ask for a truck to be named after their wives or girlfriends, daughters or mothers — then they spend the next few months trying to spot it again.

Their devotion is a remarkable

tribute to a man whose meteoric success withstood the recession and now threatens to outstrip the boom as Eddie Stobart Ltd expands inexorably year after year.

But Edward's business philosophy is as simple now as it was when he was a ten-year-old boy and bundling up firewood. "We never turn any customer away and we always do it at the right price," he says. "We are always smart, tidy — the best at everything. We have the smartest drivers and the smartest trucks and we do our job well, which is why people notice us and why we are a success."

CARMART: YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S NEW AND USED ON THE FORECOURTS

Formula One freighter

■ IT WAS appropriate, just before Christmas, to follow a star, *Stuart Birch* writes. But this one took me to Bishop's Cleeve, not Bethlehem, and it was on the bonnet of a Mercedes-Benz, not hovering in the heavens.

But if it had been necessary to carry gold, frankincense and myrrh, I am sure the car would have coped admirably with vast amounts of the stuff: it is the latest version of the Mercedes C-class Estate, the 2.5-litre turbodiesel C250.

Mercedes-Benz diesel-engined cars are famous the world over for being the automotive equivalent of Me-262s: they may not last, like him, for 969 years, but they are likely to go on and on in terms of time and miles. An example with more than 100,000 on the clock is no great rarity and one that has endured a decade of hard use is a stripping.

Without a turbocharger, though, they tend to be a bit lacking in fizz. The 1500hp turbodiesel C-class, you will be pleased to know, has plenty. In fact it is positively quick.

We were sent one with a five-speed automatic gearbox which suits it — with one

ROADTEST

C250 Estate Turbodiesel
Engine: 2497cc, five cylinder, 20-valve, 150bhp.
Performance: Top speed 125mph; 0-62mph, 10.4 seconds.
Fuel economy: (Automatic) urban, 25.7 mpg; out of town, 44.1mpg.
Equipment: ABS, driver and passenger airbags, electric sunroof, infra-red central locking.
Insurance: Group 13.
Price: £27,430 (add £1,450 for automatic).

proviso: the multi-valve, 2.5-litre engine has loads of torque, which generally matches well the electronic automatic transmission and the car will storm past slower vehicles safely and surely. It also cruises quietly and easily.

That proviso concerns the first couple of seconds of its standing-start acceleration. Entering a busy London roundabout often calls for

careful judgment and quick initial acceleration.

Flooring the accelerator pedal of the Mercedes does not produce the snappy movement which I want in that situation and which others, closing rapidly, quite reasonably expect.

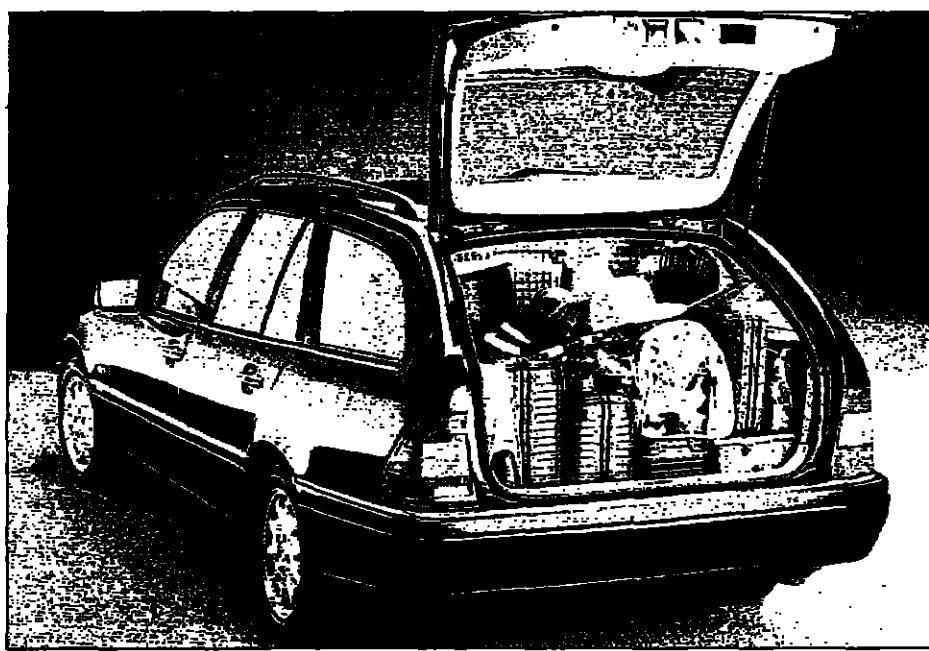
But just as surprise is turning to mild concern, the revs rise sufficiently for the whole act to come together and the Mercedes powers away from the pack.

Questioned about this initial dilatoriness, Mercedes thought it was because the test car had covered few miles and that it would improve as the mileage increased. I wonder.

That aside, the turbodiesel engine is almost sporty in its performance. Despite its hesitant start it will get to 60mph in about 10.3 seconds and top speed is around 125mph, says the company.

Of course, one of the main points of having a diesel engine is its good fuel consumption. That C-class estate sees a mid-30s average and 40 will be achieved by many owners.

The chassis of the C-class is a fine example of how to do things correctly. Ride is firm



The turbodiesel's van-like 53.3 cu ft capacity combines with a wide-opening tailgate

but comfortable, handling competent but not as sporty as the 3-series Touring.

Unlike the Audi A4 Avant and BMW 3-series Touring, which do not pretend to be estate cars in the "freighter" sense, the C-class has a good load-carrying capability but still manages to look stylish. The load area offers 16.4 cu ft of space with the divided rear seats in place, or 53.3 cu ft with

them folded, the seat cushion removed and loaded to the roof. That is quite van-like capacity.

The tailgate opens very wide, and loading the car is easy. Small items, fly about, though, because there is no retaining net on the floor. Relatively few manufacturers fit one, yet its cost-effectiveness is unquestionable. A retractable dog-guard is standard.

The car feels quite big, and certainly does not have the neat compactness of the BMW and Audi.

Build and engineering quality are of the highest order and there is particular focus on safety. There are three equipment levels to choose from. The test car was in Elegance form, which is quite luxurious but you pay extra for a radio — and for air conditioning.

Swede with staying power

■ THE SAAB 900, with its stolid Swedish looks, oozes professional respectability and common sense, writes *Vaughan Freeman*. It has also established an image as a status symbol, reports *CAP Black Book*.

Even though the car's relative scarcity on the forecourt makes it a bit pricey, and service and spare parts are higher than some rivals', the 1989-95 Saab 900 is much sought after. This is because the Saab 900 will run for at least 200,000 miles without turning a hair. It is supremely strong and well built, and

FORECOURT

will go on and on if properly cared for.

Because of its longevity, the 900 is often targeted by clockers so watch for worn-smooth gear knobs and steering wheels, indicating usage greater than the odometer claims.

Watch out for whistling turbos, accident damage and chattering turbo blades.

■ TOYOTA'S SUPRA is the cheap go-fast car. In true Japanese fashion, build quality is excellent and long-

lived. Even early models (the car sold in various guises from 1986 to 1993) are worth a look if cared for.

Once wickedly but unjustly described as a "second-division footballer's car", the Supra gives huge amounts of mph per pound.

Supra's always depreciate quickly; best buy is the 1991 3-reg turbo liftback, and expect to pay around £10,500 for a car with average mileage.

Avoid any Supra that does not come with a service history. The Supra can belt must be changed every 36,000 miles.

SPARE PARTS

other anniversaries, including Ferrari's 50th birthday. Many previously unseen Ferrari models will be at Goodwood, from early Grand Prix cars to the latest Ferrari 333SP IMSA chassis from America.

■ NEXT YEAR is also a double anniversary for the Mille Miglia, because the first was held in 1927 and the last in 1957. The festival will include an exhibition of the rarest and most significant Mille Miglia machinery.

John Surtees and his championship motorcycle display, air displays, supercars and rally cars are among the other attractions planned by the festival organisers.

■ SOARING sales of mopeds and small commuter motorcycles have prompted Honda to create a special network of dealers.

Sales of 50cc mopeds increased by 38 per cent this year and Honda plans to open about 20 new centres in the new year. The new dealerships will offer sales on the

doorstep for the new breed of commuter-bike-buyers.

"They are buying scooters and commuters because of their low cost and supreme convenience. They won't travel 30 miles to an existing dealer," says Dave Hancock, Honda's UK sales and marketing manager.

Looking ahead, I can see little change

Q Here we are at the end of another year. There are another million cars on the road and we're all stuck in jams for even longer. Where's it all going to end?

A I think you should be addressing your question to a soothsayer, or perhaps a politician. Personally, I find the jam always ends just about half an hour after you are expected at your destination.

Q I'm glad you can take it so calmly, doctor. All I hear is stories about mammoth hold-ups, roads cracking up under the strain and people getting injured in road rage attacks. It sounds like the end of motoring as we know it, don't you agree?

A Now, now, try to calm down a bit. Yes, the roads are getting more crowded and I sympathise with your frustration, but I don't think motoring has, well, er, come to the end of the road yet. If you'll pardon my little joke.

Q Of course, you always were a bit of a smooth talker. But what do you really think is going to happen to the motor industry in 1997?

A Well we doctors like to start with a bit of the patient's history. The late 1980s were a pretty terrible time for the motor industry in this country. Now things are picking up: if 1995 was the year of the people-mover then 1996 just has to be year of the sports car. Jaguar XK 8, MGF, Lotus Elise, Porsche Boxster, BMW Z3, Mercedes Benz SLK, Ferrari F350, Alfa Romeo GTV, Fiat Coupé, Renault Spider. Name any maker and they've produced some sexy two-seater this year.

Q Have you spotted any other trends? What should we be watching for?

A All right, I'll play the soothsayer. The doctor's predictions for 1997: Watch out for a rash of mini MPVs like Renault's Megane Scenic, Fiat's Multipla and Citroën's Berlingo concept; watch out for more gadgets to help you plan routes and avoid jams, like TrafficMaster, and watch out for gas-powered cars — it could prove to be a big growth area.

DR DASHBOARD

Q Sure, there'll always be a market for "boys' toys" for those with more money than sense. But what does that prove?

A Well, firstly a lot of these new sports cars are affordable, costing no more than a middle-range saloon. Secondly, history suggests that lots of sports cars is a good sign. The last time there were so many on offer was in the late 1950s and 1960s when there was a real burst of innovation in car design.

Q Nice theory, but where does that leave the rest of us who just want an ordinary small car to get from A to B?

A The other big growth area is in the mini class. Almost every maker has brought out a new small car in the past few years and even those who've never made a mini before, like Mercedes, are planning one in the very near future. These minis are a long way from the old concept of a cheap and cheerful basic car. Most of them offer lots of gadgets and automatic minis are increasingly popular.

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Tiddler on the roof: the Cri-Cri, world's smallest twin-engine plane, about to make its flying bid for the Guinness Book of Records

On a wing and a Mitsubishi

Eve-Ann Prentice describes how the French and the Japanese combined for take-off from the world's shortest carrier

The Mitsubishi Shogun lined up on the runway at RAF Kemble in Wiltshire and hurtled into wind, gathering enough speed for an attempt at a world record take-off. It was not an example of hope triumphing over physics, for the four-wheel-drive vehicle was acting as the world's smallest aircraft carrier — and had the world's smallest twin-engine aircraft latched to its roof.

As the Shogun reached 70mph, the French Cri-Cri aerobatic plane piloted by 6ft 11in Tim Senior was clipped from the Shogun and soared skywards.

The flight, on December 17, is now being hailed as the world's first take-off from the top of a car and Shogun has applied for a place in the Guinness Book of Records. Negotiations are also underway to use the duo in an adventure film.

"We bit the bullet and decided to try it for the very first time in front of the press, and it worked," says David Miles of Mitsubishi Motors. Now the Shogun and the Cri-Cri — French for cricket — plan to repeat the feat at dozens of air

shows across Britain in the coming year. The aircraft is already part of the Mitsubishi Flying Shogun Display Team, which is run by the AeroSuperBatics team based at Rendcomb in Gloucestershire.

The idea of linking a car and aeroplane in some sort of display was first mooted nearly eight years ago. But it was not until September this year that the Cri-Cri became available and, after that, the new aerobatic technique took just six weeks to perfect.

Air flow tests were carried out and a roof rack-style contraption designed to carry the aircraft. It is the car driver as well as the pilot, who ultimately decides the moment of take-off. "The pilot and the driver are in two-way radio contact and, when the pilot is happy, the driver releases a clip," says Miles.

"The oddest part was taxiing, you are sitting there with nothing to do," said Senior. "The Shogun accelerates faster than the Cri-Cri would on its own. As the air-speed increased I called 'Three... two... one... now!' and the driver let go. The aircraft lifts off quite smartly, though you have to lift the nose, but

I had absolutely no worries about it. The driver was a lot more nervous than I was."

The Cri-Cri weighs just 165lb, with a 16ft wingspan, is 13ft long and 4ft high. This compares with the Shogun's 5,997lb weight and 15ft 6in length.

When it comes to speed, however, the aircraft has the edge, with the plane having a top speed of 165mph and the Shogun a maximum of 113mph. The piggy-back lift-off plane cost £40,000; the car is just a shade cheaper at £38,000.

The record-breaking take-off will be displayed at this year's Badminton Horse Trials in May, which are sponsored by Mitsubishi.

More than two million Shoguns have been sold in 158 countries since its launch in 1983 and its attempt to get into the record books was inspired by links which Mitsubishi has forged with aviation.

"For some time, Mitsubishi Motors in the UK has been looking for an opportunity to combine an aerobatic display with one of its vehicles which could be used practically in front of large groups of spectators," said Miles.

Win a weekend in a show-stealing supercar

THE AUTOSPORT International Show next month is a must for any motor racing enthusiast. But today CAR 96, together with Privilege Insurance and the Marcos company, offers one reader a chance to do more than just oggle the spectacular machines or watch the racing round a figure-eight indoor track.

Enter our £2,500 contest and you could win an expenses-paid weekend for two with a supercar straight off a show stand.

As runner-up prizes in our competition, there will be ten pairs of tickets for the show, which runs at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre from January 10-12. Privilege, which specialises in policies for drivers who may find it difficult to insure elsewhere, is the sponsor of the British GT racing championship.

To mark its link with this spectacular branch of the sport, it will feature on its stand a Marcos LM500, the roadgoing version of the Wiltshire company's racer.

privilege INSURANCE

which won its class at this year's Le Mans 24-hour race. Our winner will have the Marcos to drive for a weekend, and enjoy a night at a hotel of his or her choice.

All you have to do is answer these three questions: 1. Who was runner-up in this year's Formula One world championship? 2. Where was this year's Motor Show held?

3. Who won this year's Network Q RAC Rally? The winner must be aged 25 or older and the prize must be taken within six months of the closing date.

The Autosport International Show features the latest in racing and rallying. Britain's World Champion, Damon Hill, will be there together with other F1 stars like David Coulthard, Mark Blundell and Johnny Herbert. It is open from 9am until 6pm on January 10-12. Booking Hotline: 0121-767-4747.

Privilege specialises in affordable insurance for drivers who, because of their age, car, occupation or driving record find it hard or costly to obtain. For further information call: 0990 998800.

Telephone your answers with your name, address and telephone number to: 0113-2001440. Closing date January 6. Calls charged at normal rates.



Privilege's stand has a Marcos LM500, the roadgoing version of the Le Mans racer

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This means a registration from Midland is always the best!

BARGAIN BASEMENT

1000	1001	1002	1003	1004	1005	1006	1007	1008	1009	1010	1011	1012	1013	1014	1015	1016	1017	1018	1019	1020	1021	1022	1023	1024	1025	1026	1027	1028	1029	1030	1031	1032	1033	1034	1035	1036	1037	1038	1039	1040	1041	1042	1043	1044	1045	1046	1047	1048	1049	1050	1051	1052	1053	1054	1055	1056	1057	1058	1059	1060	1061	1062	1063	1064	1065	1066	1067	1068	1069	1070	1071	1072	1073	1074	1075	1076	1077	1078	1079	1080	1081	1082	1083	1084	1085	1086	1087	1088	1089	1090	1091	1092	1093	1094	1095	1096	1097	1098	1099	1100	1101	1102	1103	1104	1105	1106	1107	1108	1109	1110	1111	1112	1113	1114	1115	1116	1117	1118	1119	1120	1121	1122	1123	1124	1125	1126	1127	1128	1129	1130	1131	1132	1133	1134	1135	1136	1137	1138	1139	1140	1141	1142	1143	1144	1145	1146	1147	1148	1149	1150	1151	1152	1153	1154	1155	1156	1157	1158	1159	1160	1161	1162	1163	1164	1165	1166	1167	1168	1169	1170	1171	1172	1173	1174	1175	1176	1177	1178	1179	1180	1181	1182	1183	1184	1185	1186	1187	1188	1189	1190	1191	1192	1193	1194	1195	1196	1197	1198	1199	1200	1201	1202	1203	1204	1205	1206	1207	1208	1209	1210	1211	1212	1213	1214	1215	1216	1217	1218	1219	1220	1221	1222	1223	1224	1225	1226	1227	1228	1229	1230	1231	1232	1233	1234	1235	1236	1237	1238	1239	1240	1241	1242	1243	1244	1245	1246	1247	1248	1249	1250	1251	1252	1253	1254	1255	1256	1257	1258	1259	1260	1261	1262	1263	1264	1265	1266	1267	1268	1269	1270	1271	1272	1273	1274	1275	1276	1277	1278	1279	1280	1281	1282	1283	1284	1285	1286	1287	1288	1289	1290	1291	1292	1293	1294	1295	1296	1297	1298	1299	1300	1301	1302	1303	1304	1305	1306	1307	1308	1309	1310	1311	1312	1313	1314	1315	1316	1317	1318	1319	1320	1321	1322	1323	1324	1325	1326	1327	1328	1329	1330	1331	1332	1333	1334	1335	1336	1337	1338	1339	1340	1341	1342	1343	1344	1345	1346	1347	1348	1349	1350	1351	1352	1353	1354	1355	1356	1357	1358	1359	1360	1361	1362	1363	1364	1365	1366	1367	1368	1369	1370	1371	1372	1373	1374	1375	1376	1377	1378	1379	1380	1381	1382	1383	1384	1385	1386	1387	1388	1389	1390	1391	1392	1393	1394	1395	1396	1397	1398	1399	1400	1401	1402	1403	1404	1405	1406	1407	1408	1409	1410	1411	1412	1413	1414	1415	1416	1417	1418	1419	1420	1421	1422	1423	1424	1425	1426	1427	1428	1429	1430	1431	1432	1433	1434	1435	1436	1437	1438	1439	1440	1441	1442	1443	1444	1445	1446	1447	1448	1449	1450	1451	1452	1453	1454	1455	1456	1457	1458	1459	1460	1461	1462	1463	1464	1465	1466	1467	1468	1469	1470	1471	1472	1473	1474	1475	1476	1477	1478	1479	1480	1481	1482	1483	1484	1485	1486	1487	1488	1489	1490	1491	1492	1493	1494	1495	1496	1497	1498	1499	1500	1501	1502	1503	1504	1505	1506	1507	1508	1509	1510	1511	1512	1513	1514	1515	1516	1517	1518	1519	1520	1521	1522	1523	1524	1525	1526	1527	1528	1529	1530	1531	1532	1533	1534	1535	1536	1537	1538	1539	1540	1541	1542	1543	1544	1545	1546	1547	1548	1549	1550	1551	1552	1553	1554	1555	1556	1557	1558	1559	1560	1561	1562	1563	1564	1565	1566	1567	1568	1569	1570	1571	1572	1573	1574	1575	1576	1577	1578	1579	1580	1581	1582	1583	1584	1585	1586	1587	1588	1589	1590	1591	1592	1593	1594	1595	1596	1597	1598	1599	1600	1601	1602	1603	1604	1605	1606	1607	1608	1609	1610	1611	1612	1613	1614	1615	1616	1617	1618	1619	1620	1621	1622	1623	1624	1625	1626	1627	1628	1629	1630	1631	1632	1633	1634	1635	1636	1637	1638	1639	1640	1641	1642	1643	1644	1645	1646	1647	1648	1649	1650	1651	1652	1653	1654	1655	1656	1657	1658	1659	1660	1661	1662	1663	1664	1665	1666	1667	1668	1669	1670	1671	1672	1673	1674	1675	1676	1677	1678	1679	1680	1681	1682	1683	1684	1685	1686	1687	1688	1689	1690	1691	1692	1693	1694	1695	1696	1697	1698	1699	1700	1701	1702	1703	1704	1705	1706	1707	1708	1709	1710	1711	1712	1713	1714	1715	1716	1717	1718	1719	1720	1721	1722	1723	1724	1725	1726	1727	1728	1729	1730	1731	1732	1733	1734	1735	1736	1737	1738	1739	1740	1741	1742	1743	1744	1745	1746	1747	1748	1749	1750	1751	1752	1753	1754	1755	1756	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	1762	1763	1764	1765	1766	1767	1768	1769	1770	1771	1772	1773	1774	1775	1776	1777	1778	1779	1780	1781	1782	1783	1784	1785	1786	1787	1788	1789	1790	1791	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797	1798	1799	1800	1801	1802	1803	1804	1805	1806	1807	1808	1809	1810	1811	1812	1813	1814	1815	1816	1817	1818	1819	1820	1821	1822	1823	1824	1825	1826	1827	1828	1829	1830	1831	1832	1833	1834	1835	1836	1837	1838	1839	1840	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847	1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
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Prices subject to VAT. Subject to our terms and conditions. All subject to DUT fee